



The Dao of Muhammad

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF MUSLIMS
IN LATE IMPERIAL CHINA

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Zvi Ben-Dor Benite

Published by the Harvard University Asia Center
Distributed by Harvard University Press
Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London 2005

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Printed in the United States of America

The Harvard University Asia Center publishes a monograph series and, in coordination with the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, the Korea Institute, the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and other faculties and institutes, administers research projects designed to further scholarly understanding of China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and other Asian countries. The Center also sponsors projects addressing multidisciplinary and regional issues in Asia.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Index by the author

⊗ Printed on acid-free paper

Last figure below indicates year of this printing

15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05

For

Sophia, Lulu, and Cora

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Acknowledgments

In my work on this book, I have been assisted in many ways. I began this project a long time ago as a dissertation and owe a great deal to my dissertation committee at UCLA: Irene Bierman, Benjamin Elman, Carlo Ginzburg, David Myers, and David Schaberg. To my advisor, Professor Benjamin Elman, I am grateful for careful guidance from the project's first moments through its final stages. Professor Carlo Ginzburg graciously provided crucial financial support at a time of need.

My former teacher at the Hebrew University, Professor Zvi H. Schiffrin (who in many ways never ceased to be my teacher), read one of the drafts and provided detailed comments. Professor Merle Goldman was very supportive during the final stages of this project. I am also grateful to Matt Matsuda, Omer Bartov, and the Center for Historical Analysis at Rutgers University, where I was lucky enough to hold a post-doctoral fellowship during academic year 2000–2001.

I am fortunate to have a number of good friends who are also good historians: Avner Ben-Zaken, Yuri Pines, Amnon (Nono) Raz-Krakotzkin, Eugene Sheppard, and Yitzhak Shichor. Thanks also to my friend Yigal Nizri, who helped with the reproduction of illustrations.

It is thanks to the assistance of a number of scholars in China that some of the more obscure documents assessed in this book were made available to me: Wang Jianping, Feng Jinyuan, Li Xinghua, Qin Huibin, Jin Yijiu, and Yang Yongchang, all of the

Islamic Studies Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, have been crucial to my work.

In this country, the pathbreakers in the growing field of Chinese Islamic studies have been equally valuable. I particularly thank Dru Gladney, Donald Daniel Leslie, and Jonathan Lipman. Jonathan Lipman has been generous in the copious comments he has given me on my work. I have never met Professor Leslie, but he has accompanied me ever since I read his Hebrew translation of the *Analects* of Confucius in my first year of college. His bibliographic work on Islam in China and particularly on the *Han Kitab* texts is indispensable, and without it I would have been unable to start, let alone finish, this project.

Many thanks also to the staff of the numerous libraries I made use of in writing this book: UCLA, UC Berkeley, New York Public Library, Harvard Yenching Institute, the Tōyō Bunko, and the British Museum.

Finally, to my wife, Katherine: thanks. *Ma shesheli, shelach.*

Z.B.-D.B.



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Abbreviations

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<i>HRZ (Yuandai)</i>	Bai Shouyi et al., eds., <i>Huizu renwu zhi (Yuandai)</i>
<i>HRZ (Mingdai)</i>	Bai Shouyi et al., eds., <i>Huizu renwu zhi (Mingdai)</i>
<i>HRZ (Qingdai)</i>	Bai Shouyi et al., eds., <i>Huizu renwu zhi (Qingdai)</i>
<i>HRZ (Jindai)</i>	Bai Shouyi et al., eds., <i>Huizu renwu zhi (Jindai)</i>
<i>JXCP</i>	Zhao Can, <i>Jingxue xi chuan pu</i> ; unpublished manuscript, 1677; punctuated ed., 1989
<i>QSMZJ</i>	Ma Saibei, ed., <i>Qing shilu Musilin ziliao jilu</i>
<i>QZZN</i>	Ma Zhu, <i>Qingzhen zhinan</i> (1989)
<i>ZQX</i>	Wang Daiyu, <i>Zhengjiao zhenquan, Qingzhen daxue, Xizhen zhengda</i>
<i>ZSSL</i>	Liu Zhi, <i>Tianfang zhisheng shilu</i> (1987)
<i>ZSSL (1874)</i>	Liu Zhi, <i>Tianfang zhisheng shilu</i> (1874)
<i>ZYSC</i>	Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, eds., <i>Zhongguo Yisilan jiaoshi cankao ziliao xuanpian, 1911–1949</i>

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Introduction

In 847 or soon thereafter, the career of one Li Yansheng 李彥昇 sparked a debate among several Chinese men of letters and prompted one of them, Chen An 陳黯, to compose an essay entitled *Hua xin* 華心, or “The Heart of Being Hua.”¹ As the story goes, Li Yansheng “a native of the Arabian empire” (*Dashiguo ren* 大食國人),² was recommended to the throne by Lü Jun 慮鈞 (774–860), the military governor of Daliang 大梁, who had “discovered” him. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry of Rites, on orders from the throne, tested the abilities of the Arab, who did well and ended up obtaining a *jinsshi* 進士 (the third, and highest) degree. This made some people, sponsors of other candidates, unhappy. One of them turned to Chen An, the author of the text in which we find this story, and asked:

Liang is great city, and its governor a worthy man. He has received his charge from a Hua sovereign and his salary from Hua people; yet when he recommends candidates, he takes them from among the barbarians. Are there none praiseworthy among the Hua that this barbarian is the only one who could be employed? I am afraid I have misgivings about our governor.

1. The text is found in *Quan Tang wen* 767/27a–b (p. 7986). The translation is from Hartman, *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity*, p. 158. I thank Professor Hartman for his kindness in clarifying several questions concerning this story and text behind it.

2. Li could well have been a Persian-speaking Muslim and not necessarily an Arab, since *Dashiguo* 大食國 referred at the time to all Muslim lands indiscriminately.

Apart from the familiar argument (often found in contemporary complaints by “patriotic” citizens, who question the employment of foreigners, particularly in high offices), we can detect here the additional undertone of cultural supremacy: why appoint a “barbarian” (viz., “an uncivilized person”) when you can appoint a Chinese, imply those who disapprove of Li’s appointment.

Chen An, a Tang intellectual of little fame, answered:

The governor in truth recommended this man for his ability, without regard to his origin. If one speaks in term of geography (*di* 地), then there are Hua and barbarians. But if one speaks in terms of education, then there can be no such difference. For the distinction between Hua and barbarian rests in the heart and is determined by their different inclinations.

If one is born in the central provinces and yet acts contrary to ritual and propriety, then this is to have a look of a Hua but the heart of a barbarian. If one is born in the barbarian lands and yet acts in accordance with ritual and propriety, then this is to have the look of a barbarian and the heart of a Hua.

There was, for instance, the rebellion of Lu Wan. Was he a barbarian? And there was the loyalty of Chin Jih-ti. Was he a Hua? From this we can see that all depends on inclination.

Now Li Yen-sheng came from beyond the seas yet was able to make his virtues known to the governor, who singled him out for recommendation so as to encourage the Jung and Ti and to cause all the world to submit to the influence of our bright culture. For one is Hua by heart and not by geography. And since there are still barbarians among us, I have composed “The Heart of Being a Hua.”³

This anecdote is connected in more than one way to the story told in this book. At the most superficial level, the protagonists of this study are linked to this anecdote by virtue of the fact that they also are “Arabians,” people who were identified as Muslims by those around them and who self-identified as such. More profoundly, this anecdote is germane in that the men with whom this book is concerned, literati living in China’s large eastern urban centers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were, like Lin Yansheng, caught in a heated debate about the meaning and nature of being “Hua,” or “Chinese.” Like him, they were well versed in the Chinese classics, and many of them held official Chinese degrees.

3. Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*, p. 159.

As Charles Hartman has shown in his discussion of this anecdote, Chen An's position on the questions raised by Li Yansheng's case is what we might call a "classic non-xenophobic" Chinese position: whatever his geographic origins, a man who submits to "our bright culture" is a Hua.⁴ Chen's words express the belief in Chinese cultural supremacy as well as in its assimilative, civilizing, or "sinicizing" qualities. As is well known, this optimistic (if chauvinistic) position came to be paradigmatic during the late imperial period and has been reiterated by many scholars of Chinese history, both inside and outside China.⁵

This book is most concerned with the proposition, as Chen An puts it, that "if one speaks in terms of geography, then there are Hua and barbarians. But if one speaks in terms of education, then there can be no such difference." On one hand, it focuses on a group of people who invested heavily in their belief that this was the case. On the other, it is concerned with people who at the same time had a potent sense of the "otherness" of their purported geographic origins and who relied on that very "otherness" to construct their own version of Chinese identity.

This book is also about the subtle gradations of various forms of Chinese "identity." It takes as its core case a group of Chinese Muslims, highly educated *literati*, who in the early Qing period composed a body of literature that at once testified to their understanding of themselves both as Chinese men of letters and as members of a specifically Muslim branch of Chinese knowledge. Although those who are interested in debates over the "sinicizing process" will find my arguments relevant, it is not my main aim to participate in that debate. Rather, I hope to show that there are more than two dichotomous perspectives, just as there are more than two possible perspectives in the anecdote about Li Yansheng. What, for instance, of Li Yansheng's perspective? What would Li Yan-

4. Ibid., p. 158.

5. For a critical summary of this position, see Wang Gongwu, "The Chinese Urge to Civilize." For the most recent systematic argument upholding sinicization, see Ping-ti Ho, "In Defense of Sinicization." Ho's article was written in response to Evelyn Rawski's "Re-envisioning the Qing," a systematic criticism of the sinicization model. Mark Elliott's treatment of the question is highly relevant to this study; see his *The Manchu Way*, p. 32.

sheng, after passing the examinations and proving his competency in a body of knowledge supposedly “foreign” to him, have said about “being Hua” or “becoming Hua”? Would he have been concerned with locating himself vis-à-vis Chinese culture? After being immersed in the Chinese classics, how would he have understood Islam and its relationship to his newly acquired culture? Would he somehow feel “less Muslim” or “more Chinese”? Must the making of a “Hua” mean the unmaking of a Muslim?

This book tries to answer some of these questions and to offer a vista onto the world of a group of people to whom such questions mattered a great deal. It does so by focusing on a corpus of writings produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Muslim literati who wrestled with many of the questions posed by the anecdote about Li Yansheng. These men of letters were not the first Muslims to have mastered the Chinese classics, nor were they the first to become part of the state apparatus. But they were the first to express themselves specifically *as* Muslims, to describe their experience as Muslims living in China, and to document the communal myths that made sense of their place both within Islam and within Chinese culture.

In many ways, then, this study follows—and is indebted to—the path recently forged in the historiography of late imperial China by such scholars as Pamela Crossley, Evelyn Rawski, Mark Elliott, and others who have made use of texts produced in languages other than Chinese by non-Chinese peoples. Crossley and Rawski in particular have long argued for the importance of Manchu-language scholarship. Their studies, along with Elliott’s, provide us with a much fuller and more nuanced picture of the Qing period than have those based solely on Chinese-language texts.⁶ As Rawski has put it: “All [such] materials . . . , regardless of the language in which they were written, are ‘insider’s views’—produced either for working purposes or as part of the imperial communication with the bureaucracy. . . . It is time to change the lenses and reorder the narrative.”⁷

6. See Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*; Rawski, *The Last Emperors*; and Elliott, *The Manchu Way*.

7. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, p. 13.

This book gives another “insider’s view,” that of a highly educated group of scholars based in the urban centers of eastern China. These scholars were the authors of an array of genres of literature, composed in Chinese, Arabic, and Persian (although the bulk by far is in Chinese), which together make up the *Han Kitab* (Ch. 漢克塔補)—a designation that combines the Chinese word for “Chinese” with the Arabic word for “book.” This collection is the product of a remarkable, centuries-long period of intense intellectual interaction between Islam and Confucianism, as those categories were understood by Chinese Muslim scholars who felt intellectually associated with both. The philosophical treatises, anecdotes, stories, histories, and geographical works in this “Chinese [Islamic] Book” provide an unprecedented look into the cultural life of early modern Chinese elite society and reveal the complex genealogical and pedagogical links that tied elite, literati Muslims together. Whereas recent works on the Manchu ruling elite have sought to reconstruct the perspective of the rulers of China, this book attempts to reconstruct the perspective of one of its ruled groups. In this manner, it seeks to provide what Rawski calls an “insider’s view” of literate Chinese Muslims.

Chinese Islam and Shifting Paradigms in the Qing Period

The century and a half between the early 1600s and the late 1700s witnessed the development and consolidation of a widespread Chinese Muslim educational network. The primary source material on this network is also its greatest product: the *Han Kitab*, a collection of over a hundred texts, all related to Islamic matters, that over the course of time gained a quasi-canonical status within the Chinese Muslim learned community. The *Han Kitab* ultimately became the basic curriculum of Chinese Muslim education. The primary subject of this book is this educational network and the texts upon which it rested and which it in turn generated—texts that together constitute the *Han Kitab*.

This study is concerned with the ways in which one very specific Chinese Muslim identity was created, shaped, and expressed through the *Han Kitab*. It is thus neither a general history of Mus-

lim Chinese nor a history of “Chinese Muslim identity” as a monolithic whole. In this regard I follow the seminal works of Jonathan Lipman and particularly Dru Gladney, both of whom have developed a more nuanced approach, from historical and anthropological points of view, to the study of Muslims and Islam in China. My study of the *Han Kitab* has shown me that in the early modern period there was no such thing as a Chinese Muslim identity, despite claims to the contrary by the state (pre- and post-imperial) or by early scholars and observers of Chinese Islam. This study of the urban, scholarly, “literati” Chinese Muslim elite of eastern China, particularly the Yangzi Delta (Jiangnan 江南), is concerned with the foundation and dissemination of a specifically Chinese form of Islamic knowledge, one that claimed to be compatible with—indeed, a subset of—Confucian knowledge and learning.

My use of the term *shi* 士—“literati”—is deliberate. I use it both because it is the term by which these Chinese Muslim scholars referred to themselves and because my study of the *Han Kitab* suggests that the category “literatus” was not accessible only to Han Chinese elites. Benjamin Elman has suggested that “literati” be used to refer “to selected members of the [Han Chinese] gentry who maintained their status as cultural elites primarily through classical scholarship, knowledge of lineage ritual, and literary publication.”⁸ This is a definition to which, in expanded fashion, this study subscribes. Indeed, I suggest that Chinese Muslim scholars defined themselves, in part, through the category of “literatus.”

In the past two decades, the cultural and intellectual historiography of late imperial China has shown that, after the Tang dynasty, literary production was a means of retaining elite status; in the case of the Chinese Muslims who produced the *Han Kitab*, it was also a means of gaining elite status. Chinese Muslim scholars did not simply “maintain” their status as a cultural elite through scholarship; rather, they forged it through scholarship. Genealogical discourse, classical scholarship (both Islamic and mainstream “Confucian”), and literary production were the means through which Chinese Muslims came to understand themselves as “literati.” In my use of this term, I also take my lead from Peter Bol,

8. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, p. xvii.

who has suggested that “literati” is preferable to “Confucian” when describing Chinese elites.⁹ My discussion of the accessibility of this category to certain Chinese Muslims is indebted to Bol’s arguments in favor of its expanded use.

At the same time as this book explores the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars defined themselves, and understood their status, vis-à-vis the backdrop of “general” Chinese culture,¹⁰ it investigates how the multiethnic character of the Qing period opened new social categories to more marginal groups (what we now call Chinese “minorities”) such as Muslims.¹¹ As my use of the term *shi* “literatus” (and other terms, such as *jiaxue* 家學, or “school”) suggests, this study is interested in the ways in which these Chinese Muslims described themselves; it is not a study of imperial or state descriptions of Chinese Muslims or of the external construction of “Chinese Muslim” as a category within, or as a subset of, Chinese culture.

In saying that Chinese Muslim scholars came to understand themselves as an elite and as literati, I certainly do not mean to say that other (“Han”) elites regarded Muslim scholars in this way. Nor do I mean to suggest that the Chinese Muslim educational network constituted a school within what we consider to be the implicitly sanctioned scholarly milieu of the time. However, my evidence for a widespread Chinese Muslim scholarly network does show it to have been patterned on contemporary Chinese schools of scholarship. Similarly, although I argue that Chinese Muslim scholars were “successful” in negotiating a Chinese elite identity for themselves, I do not mean to suggest that they gained some sort of special recognition from official institutions. By “successful,” I mean only that they succeeded in finding a “healthy minded” way of

9. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*”; see also idem, “Seeking Common Ground.”

10. Categories such as “Han,” “Confucian,” and “Chinese” have, of course, been constructed differently at different times. For lack of less problematic terminology, I use them more or less interchangeably, depending on the context, to denote the dominant culture in which Muslim scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found themselves.

11. In this case, again, I am referring to the minority known today as the Hui shaoshu minzu (Hui Minority Nationality).

understanding themselves within their greater cultural context.¹² Simply put, the form of identity forged by these people made sense to a large number of people over a long stretch of time.

This study is one of identity as seen and generated from within, from the bottom up. It is intended to stand as an alternative to a body of literature on the so-called Hui Minority Nationality (Ch. *Hui shaoshu minzu* 回少數民族), which is concerned with Chinese Muslims as a group constituted by an outside gaze.¹³ The “Hui” have been studied by missionaries, by modern Hui nationalist historians, and by the Chinese state itself (imperial- and post-imperial) as a whole, definitionally circumscribed by “Islam.” The ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars of the late Ming and early Qing understood themselves as “Chinese” is one of this study’s central concerns. Put differently, this study is interested in Chinese Muslims as much for their “Chineseness” as for their “Muslimness.”

This work, then, is interested in “Chinese” cultural categories (and “Chineseness” itself) as those categories were used, expanded, interpreted, and manipulated by a people long assumed to have been excluded by those categories. Many recent scholars have suggested the need to re-examine the basic organizing taxa of Chinese imperial culture. For instance, James Millward’s work on Qing policies toward Central Asian contributes to an ongoing interrogation of “‘Chinese’ as a primordial, fixed ethnic category.” He notes that “new anthropological approaches . . . treat ethnicity not as an inherent trait but as a relational identity constructed in opposition to other groups, or in response to state policies.”¹⁴ Although Millward is explicitly more interested in “external, state-imposed categories [of ethnicity] than [in] the dynamics of individual identity,” he, like myself, is also interested in shifting the focus away from “the nature of ethnic identity” as a monolithic category.¹⁵

12. I borrow the term from William James, who used it to describe a form of religiosity that is based not on literal “belief” but on a strategy of finding a way of making sense of one’s world and of rendering one’s culture plausible; see James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 78–113.

13. On the problematic of the “Nationality [*minzu*] Paradigm” in Chinese Muslim historiography in the PRC, see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. xx–xxv.

14. Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, p. 14.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 14*n*.

Millward asks of China's millions of minorities, "If not in some sense 'Chinese,' what are such people?"¹⁶ His question urges us to consider more seriously the "Chinese" aspect of such peoples' "hyphenated identities," as Jonathan Lipman has termed them.¹⁷ This study is an attempt to do just that. It also is an attempt to explore the ways in which, because of the longstanding interpretive paradigms deployed by historians of China, the specific Chinese Muslims with which this study is concerned—eastern, urban, and gentrified—have been just as definitively written off the map, as it were, as their western counterparts. As Millward has shown, the Qing imperial expansion into Inner Asia has, by and large, been considered an unimportant chapter in late imperial history. He demonstrates that the "elision of Qing Xinjiang and Inner Asia from the historiography of 'modern' China is not accidental" and convincingly argues that it is, to a large extent, "the result of how the boundaries of modern Chinese history itself have been drawn by some of the field's most influential historians."¹⁸

Millward's words apply just as well to the groups of people with whom this study is concerned. Longstanding models of interpretation—both within the field of Chinese history and within that of Chinese Muslim studies—have made it difficult to imagine Chinese Muslims as anything other than alien and problematic within a Chinese context, as people(s) who can rectify the "problem" of their existence within China only through successful "sinicization." Millward's literal, geographic exclusions apply also culturally, to groups whom established lenses of interpretation have made it difficult to see.

Pamela Crossley's work on the Manchus has demonstrated the flexibility of Chinese cultural categories by showing how the Manchus constructed their own "Manchuness" in dialogue with those cultural categories.¹⁹ Her recent study of Qing imperial ideology notes the difficulty of working with a paradigm that assumes a

16. Ibid., p. 10.

17. Lipman, "Hyphenated Chinese: Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern China."

18. Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, p. 5.

19. Crossley, "*Manzhou yuanliu kao*"; see also idem, "An Introduction to the Qing Foundation Myth."

seamless national narrative: "No matter how well the paradigm works in describing the processes by which communitarian concepts become propagated as national identities, the substance of any particular national narrative remains elusive. The cultural bits out of which such identities have been cobbled have vastly divergent origins, and the bits themselves are not theoretically neutral or interchangeable."²⁰ Within the same field, Mark Elliott's study of the Banner system shows how the Manchu identity—or "ethnicity," to use his key term—was shaped, negotiated, and preserved through and within its core social and military organization, the Eight Banners. Elliott maintains that the Manchu rulers used the Banner system, "the most fundamentally Manchu of all Qing institutions,"²¹ to preserve and reshape the "Manchu Way," the system of symbols, memories, and values, that, put simply, made a Manchu person "Manchu."

This study of the *Han Kitab* and its scholars attempts to assemble some of the "cultural bits" used by Chinese Muslim literati to cobble together their identity as a scholarly elite. The core of this book traces some of the many components that went into Chinese Muslim scholars' self-perception and their view of the role of scholarship in the creation and propagation of their identity as Chinese and Muslim. Whereas Elliott finds or locates the generator of Manchu identity within the Banner system, I locate the generator of Chinese Muslim identity within the educational network that produced the scholars who in turn produced the *Han Kitab*. (I am not, however, suggesting the Chinese Muslim educational network and Banner system operated in the same way—the educational network was certainly not an official institution, and, unlike the Bannermen, its affiliates were not forced to be part of it.)

Crossley's exploration of the flexibility of Chinese cultural categories used the Manchus as the "case study," as it were, for categorical flexibility. But the Manchus, no matter how "foreign," were, after all, the rulers of China. Crossley's arguments are nevertheless well supported by my own research, which deals with a group of people far from the official sources of power in Chinese society.

20. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*.

21. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 374.

Crossley is quite right that the key, in the Manchus' case, was not the fact of their power but the pliability of the categories to which they had access. That Chinese Muslim scholars, like the Manchus of Crossley's study, were able to assemble their own coherent identity within Chinese society testifies to the accuracy of her insights. Indeed, in some instances—that of communal foundation myths, for instance—the creators of the *Han Kitab* and the Manchus deployed strikingly similar tropes. The atmosphere of changing epistemologies and geographies that was in large part generated by the Manchu rulers also enabled the project of the *Han Kitab*.

The primary vehicles for the Chinese Muslim literati assemblage of identity were scholarship, pedagogy, genealogical study, and literary production in Chinese. All were central components of Chinese Muslim education in the late imperial period. The educational network with which this study is concerned was the workshop in which disparate "cultural bits" were brought together to create one distinct and flexible form of Chinese Muslim identity, an identity in which "Chineseness" was as central as "Muslimness." These bits came from "Han" culture, the collective Muslim Chinese scholarly "memory" of the arrival of Muslims in China, Islam as both a formal (canonical) and "folk" tradition, "Confucian" literature (the classics, the histories), imperial institutions (among them the examination system), echoes of Jesuit missionary discourse, established Chinese literary forms (such as genealogical discourse), and indigenous Chinese Muslim origin myths. Even these represent only a small set—that captured in texts²²—of the numerous components that went into late imperial Chinese Muslim literati identity.²³

The groundbreaking efforts of Crossley, Rawski, Millward, and Elliott have demonstrated definitively that the Qing period is best characterized as "multiethnic." Whereas earlier interpreta-

22. Irschick, *Dialogue and History*, pp. 1–3.

23. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*. Dru Gladney also sees Bakhtin's model as relevant to the Chinese Muslim instance: "Bakhtin's approach, when adapted to understanding cultural identity formation, can yield a . . . powerful theory of cultural and ethnic conflict and accommodation in the context of contemporary nation-states, thus contributing to a growing literature of support for the wider relevance of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to the study of social relations" (Gladney, "Clashed Civilizations?," p. 107).

tions tended to rest on a binary model of opposition (Chinese/non-Chinese), theirs have instead imparted a healthy complexity to the cultural context of the Qing and in turn released us from the endless debate over “Chineseness.” It is no coincidence that the Chinese Muslim scholarly network developed most fully during the Qing period—at a time when, as we now see, cultural categories were flexible, fungible, and accessible to all sorts of groups. Even as the Manchus themselves sought to establish their identity within this complex context, so, too, did other elites—among them Chinese Muslim literati—who had long sought legitimization within “Chinese” society. In the effort, they changed the very nature of “Chineseness” itself.

As we shall see, Chinese Muslim scholars of the early and mid- (or “high”) Qing period had long understood their Islamic “identity” through genealogy: the community’s collective memory was of itself as Muslim. In the Qing, however, this genealogical preoccupation fused with the powerful new source of Islamic identity provided by scholarship and learning in Chinese. The Chinese Muslim scholarly network drew life both from centuries of genealogical memory *and* from the new cultural flexibility of the Qing. The history of the scholars of the *Han Kitab*, then, is both a Muslim genealogical history and a Qing-era Chinese history.

Simultaneity and “Diasporicity” in Chinese Muslim Literati Identity

This process of identity formation is not adequately captured by such terms as “accommodation”²⁴ (which implies some sort of

24. “Accommodation” is often the word of choice in analyses of Chinese Muslim and Chinese Christian identity. See, e.g., Gladney, “Clashed Civilizations?”; Mungello, *Curious Land*; Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*; Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 24–58; Rule, *K’ung-tzu or Confucius?*; Blusse and Zurndorfer, *Conflict and Accommodation*. “Accommodation” as the paradigm for understanding Chinese contact with foreign religions comes from the Jesuits’ own way of describing their situation in China. As the title of Blusse and Zurndorfer’s volume indicates, “accommodation” is most often understood as one of two possible outcomes of cultural contact of this sort; the other is “conflict.” Any survey of bibliographies of Christianity and Islam in China quickly reveals that in the case of the former, contact is understood as a form of “accommodation.” In that of the latter,

“compromise”) or “syncretism” (which assumes the blending of distinct, well-defined entities to create a new, distinct, and well-defined entity).²⁵ Crossley has used the term “simultaneous” to describe Qing emperorship and to convey the fact that its “imperial utterances” were polylingual, a “simultaneous expression of imperial intentions in multiple cultural frames.”²⁶ This is a notion that, homologously, has helped me to understand late imperial Chinese Muslim literati identity as at once fully “Muslim” and fully “Chinese.” “Chinese Muslimness” was, for the *Han Kitab* scholars, an identity not of accommodation, compromise, or syncretism but of simultaneity. As we shall see, Chinese Muslim scholarly identity, while dialogically constructed, was one by which these scholars understood themselves as simultaneously Chinese and Muslim. Chinese Muslim literati did not carry two different identities at the same time; rather, they positioned themselves in an imagined space that belonged to and corresponded with both “China” and “Islam.”²⁷

In a study of eighteenth-century imperial ritual, Angela Zito argues that “the discourses of *wen*, whether concerning writing, painting, building, or ritual performance, continuously elaborated an interlocking set of practices designed to situate subjectivity at the mediating center, capable of elaborating distinctions.”²⁸ Although Zito’s primary interest is in rituals of sacrifice and their role as what she terms “text/performance,” her elaboration of the term “encompassment” is relevant to the authors of the *Han Kitab*, although I use it here in a different context and to a different purpose.

contact seems inevitably to result in “conflict.” This historiographical bias cannot be addressed here but is worth noting. I suspect that it stems, among other factors, from Western attitudes toward Islam, the Chinese state’s (imperial and post-imperial) “official” depiction of Muslims, and the century-long history of Muslim rebellions in western China.

25. For a discussion of syncretism concerning the Hui, see Allès, *Musulmans de Chine*, pp. 289–97. Allès contrasts the term to “juxtaposition,” which she finds more satisfactory.

26. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, p. 11.

27. On Chinese Muslim identity as a dialogical construction, see Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*; and idem, “Introduction: Making and Marking Majorities.”

28. Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, p. 219.

To argue, as this book does, that Chinese Muslims were at once fully Muslim and fully Chinese is not to suggest that others (i.e., non-Muslim Chinese) did not view them as somehow “other” or that such Muslims would have been regarded by the core Islamic world as mainstream Muslims. Rather, the case of the *Han Kitab* texts and their authors shows that literary production was the means through which the Chinese Muslim literati elite was able to write itself into both Chinese dominant elite culture and elite Muslim tradition. That is to say, these individuals used textual production as a way to create for themselves a space that overlapped Chinese culture and Islamic tradition. Thus they inserted themselves into both Islamic and Chinese hierarchies and made themselves—in their own minds—essential to both. According to the insiders’ view Chinese Muslim give of themselves through the *Han Kitab*, their “Islam” was not so much accommodated or transformed (or “sinicized”) as it was *encompassed* by China and its culture.

Zito’s use of “encompassment” derives from Louis Dumont, the great sociologist of India, who explored the relationship between the religious and the political realms. Dumont rejected the notion of exclusive and excluding hierarchies and instead viewed these two realms as “encompassing” each other. The field of ritual studies, which is largely built on the foundations laid by Dumont and other Indologists, has effectively shown that hierarchies are far more complicated than their superficial appearance as “top-down” structures indicates. As Zito puts it, in the Chinese imperial case, the imperial hierarchy was “theoriz[ed] . . . as a whole containing many, unequally valued but equally necessary parts.” In this whole, rituals surrounding the Qing emperor brought about a “mode of social engagement [that] act[ed] not to overcome Others by force but to include them in its own projects of rulership.”²⁹ The creation and use of the *Han Kitab* analogously provided a means of making Chinese Muslims, if not of “equal value” then of “equal necessity” to Chinese literati culture. The project of the *Han Kitab* was, however, self-directed. That is, it expressed its creators’ view that they were of “equal necessity,” but it certainly did not bring

29. Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, p. 29.

other Chinese elites to view Chinese Muslims in this way. One of the core aims of this book is to trace this self-documentation and to look beyond the claims non-Muslim Chinese have made about Chinese Muslims to the words of Chinese Muslims themselves.

Most of the cases discussed in this book show a strategy of encompassment at play. Take, for example, the case of a fictional exchange between the Prophet Muhammad and the Sui emperor, written into a biography of the Prophet authored by Liu Zhi 劉智 (ca. 1660–1724), a Chinese Muslim author of the first half of the eighteenth century (elaborated in Chapter 3). In Liu's account, the Chinese emperor is notified by his astrologers of the rise of a great Arabian ruler, Muhammad. On hearing the news, the emperor sends envoys to Arabia requesting advice and help from Muhammad. The Prophet responds by sending one of his closest friends, accompanied by a group of Muslims. Twenty years later, Muhammad's friend returns to Arabia but his companions remain in China. Following the instructions of the Prophet, they settle there, build mosques, and marry Chinese women. This Muslim presence, explains the story, protects the empire and maintains its internal harmony. This basic motif is repeated in numerous stories committed to writing by eighteenth-century *Han Kitab* authors; all intimate that China's Muslims are none other than the descendants of the original company of Muslims sent to China on the direct order of Prophet, at the invitation of the Chinese emperor.

These tales create a framework in which Chinese Muslims are placed at the overlapping center of a sort of Venn diagram, one that shows two imagined spaces, "Islam" and "China," and their point of intersection. Chinese Muslims, occupying the shared space between—in China at the behest of the emperor and on the orders of Muhammad—are, in the story, not of highest importance in either realm but are essential to both. *Han Kitab* scholars carved out a *topos* made of two overlapping imagined spaces, broadly defined as "China" and "Islam," and positioned themselves within it.

It was from that overlapping center that, through the creative use of geographical and historical imagination, Chinese Muslim literati engaged in dialogue with the dominant Chinese elite. At the same time, this dialogue created the overlapping center itself.

Through literary production, *Han Kitab* scholars centered themselves between two reified entities, “China” and “Islam,” in an imagined “zone of engagement” between the two. They thus assigned *encompassability* to the “recipient” of the Muslims, China.³⁰ But even as “China” is assigned an encompassability with regards to the Muslims who had come to live within its borders, it is in turn as a whole encompassed by the overall backdrop of the story.

This sort of double encompassment is perhaps best exemplified by another story, a bit better known and from a different tradition. At the time of the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE, the Babylonians exiled select groups of Judaeans to Babylon. Many centuries later, the Talmud, the great literary creation of Babylonian Jewry, explained the Judaeans’ exile to Babylon as a return: “Because He [God] sent them [back] to their mother’s house. To what this might be likened? To a man angered at his wife. To where does he send her—to her mother’s house!”³¹

As Isaiah Gafni notes, “Implicit . . . [is that the Judaeans] were granted haven in the one territory uniquely qualified to receive them in light of their ancient roots . . . , thereby affording them, even while uprooted, a sense of comfort and familiarity rather than the expected alienation of captivity.”³² (This is a reference to Abraham’s Mesopotamian origins.) In the tale, then, Babylon is at once a place of exile and of “comfort and familiarity.” Here, “Babylon,” the recipient of the Jews, is ascribed with encompassability; after all, it is their “mother’s house,” the first home of their patriarch. At the same time Babylon itself is *encompassed* by being written into the divine plan that made it home to the Jews and included, or encompassed, it within Jewish tradition.

My use of a diasporic group seeking to find a link to its place of exile is deliberate. Muslims in China in earlier periods (the Song through the early Ming) saw themselves as sojourners, temporary residents for mercantile purposes, and did not consider China their

30. I borrow the term “encompassability” from James Hevia but use it differently; see Hevia, “Sovereignty and Subject,” p. 193.

31. The passage appears in *Talmud Bavli*, tractate Pesahim, 87b. It is cited in Gafni, “Babylonian Rabbinic Culture,” p. 224.

32. Gafni, “Babylonian Rabbinic Culture,” p. 224.

permanent home. In contrast, Chinese Muslims of later periods understood their presence in China to be the result of more profound dislocations. Eastern, urban, Chinese Muslim communities, in particular, were acutely aware of their double displacement: on the one hand, by living beyond the borders of the *Dar al-Islam* (House of Islam), they were both in violation of Islamic Law—which requires all Muslims to live under the rule of Islam—and lacking in the direct geographical connection with the Islamic world enjoyed by their coreligionists in China's western provinces.³³ On the other, they were displaced from Chinese elite society.

During the Ming period, these Muslims underwent a long process of acculturation; they adopted Chinese material culture, language, and surnames. As Lipman has shown, this process was accompanied by changes in the taxonomies produced by the state, changes that expressed a transformation of their status from temporary to permanent residents.³⁴ The resultant permanent sense of displacement was a crucial factor in the shaping of their identity as Chinese Muslims, rather than as Muslims living in China.³⁵ In other words, it was only after making China their home that Chinese Muslims felt the need to acknowledge, and account for, their displacement—for their presence in China. This sense of displacement was only a part of the distinctly “diasporic” aspect of Chinese Muslim literati identity, an aspect that comes clearly into play in Chinese Muslim genealogical writing, with which Chapters 1 and 2 are concerned.

Within these multiple schemata of encompassment, displacement, and diasporicity, “Islam” was reified both as a geographical *topos* and as an imaginary space. This is perhaps best typified in the evolution of the term used for “Arabia,” which by the seventeenth century came to be known in official Chinese records as Tianfang 天方 (or 房). The term, used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike,

33. On the obligation to migrate from a country ruled by infidels to the House of Islam, see, e.g., Masud, “The Obligation to Migrate.” See also al-Shithrī, *Hukm al-lujū’ wa-al iqāmah fi bilād al-kuffār*. For a discussion of China in Islamic imagination, see Ben-Dor, “‘Even unto China.’”

34. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 29–44.

35. Ben-Dor, “‘Even unto China.’”

literally meant “Heavenly Square,” likely a reference to the Ka’ba, the holy Black Stone in Mecca.³⁶ The term eventually became a designator in Chinese not only for Islamic lands but also for Islam itself. Seen from China, therefore, “Islam” carried a very strong locative connotation, and *Tianfang*, in the Chinese context, was a translocative term. In many other cases, Chinese Muslims used other geographical terms, such as *xiyu* 西域 (western regions) to denote Islam. The heavy locative weight of Islam, in both Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese cultures during the Qing, strongly shaped the sense of “diasporicity” Chinese Muslims felt. Although most studies of Chinese Muslims have focused on their “minority” status, the real issue at play was this diasporicity—the ongoing links between an imagined, *spatialized* “Islam,” and China itself.



It is one thing to dispense with longstanding interpretive models. Revising the sinicizing model is, after all, rather easy at this point. It is more difficult to construct and suggest new models of interpretation. Crossley, Rawski, Elliott, and Millward and others have boldly laid out possible future paths in the venture of developing new and more nuanced models for looking at Chinese history. Following their lead, my study of the *Han Kitab* scholars has led me to think of them as engaged in an “implicit dialogue” or “conversation” between and among the many different voices that characterized Chinese society in the Qing period. Here I have been greatly inspired by Gladney’s discussion of civilizational dialogue in his study of ethnic nationalism in twentieth-century China. The term “implicit dialogue” is not intended as a metahistoric, hermeneutic device that can comprehend all forms of cultural exchange and social transformation that different peoples and social groups in China underwent throughout history. More modestly, it simply suggests that component(s) of all such exchanges and transformations consisted of input from more than one voice. This dialogue

36. For a glossary of Chinese Islamic terms, see Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, pp. 393–422. See also the explication of key terms in Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*.

was not at all times (although at some points it was) direct, regulated, or formalized through official channels.

Chinese Muslim scholars engaged in a dialogue with their surrounding context in many ways, formal and informal. They responded to one another, to the western Islamic literary tradition, and to the changing history of their own group. They also responded to Confucian and imperial culture, filtering it through their own categories, even as those categories were in turn forged in part through examination of their own, non-Muslim, context. In their writings, this dialogue took the form of “answering” questions or claims that an “opposite” side (be it Muslim or non-Muslim) might be asking and posing but without articulating their responses as answers. That is, the implicit dialogue of the Chinese Muslim scholarly elites of eastern China in the early Qing was embedded in a multiply-encoded cultural loop.

The task of the historian is not to try to establish and reconstruct essentialized positions: “Islamic” and “Chinese,” or “Islamic” and “Confucian.” Rather, it is to write the history of Chinese Islam as a part of an ongoing dialogic process through which the categories “Islam” and “China,” and the dialogue itself, were forged. The scholars who created the *Han Kitab* and the educational constituency that supported them provide us with one historicized view of what this dialogue looked like in action.



The core portion of this book, Chapter 1, is perhaps best used as a reference. It seeks to reconstruct and document a Chinese Islamic educational network from the time of its establishment in the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. It is largely based on a hitherto unexamined Chinese Muslim genealogy. The fact that this text has not been subject to earlier scholarly scrutiny has led me to use it as a detailed road map for Chinese Muslim education in the period, and it may be more detailed than the casual reader desires. For those interested in such detail, supplementary charts and tables tracing links in the genealogical chain are provided in the Appendix.

Chapter 2 analyzes a number of the anecdotes and tales told in the *Han Kitab* literature and uses them as the basis for probing the themes of displacement and diasporicity so prominent in Chinese Muslim writings. It also discusses genealogy as a genre and contends that Chinese Muslim scholars explicitly and self-consciously made use of the literary forms then dominant in mainstream Chinese literati culture.

Chapter 3 argues that just as Chinese Muslim intellectuals made use of dominant literary forms, so, too, did they organize themselves into something recognizable as a “school,” in the sense denoted by that term in the early Qing period.

Chapter 4 explores the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars engaged explicitly with Confucianism and Confucian scholarship. It shows how Chinese Muslim myths of origin tied Muslims at once to the central tenets of Confucianism and to the central and original figures in Islam.

Finally, the Conclusion takes one historical episode from the late eighteenth century and uses it to show the multiple ways in which Chinese Muslim scholarship of the Qing period interacted with the state and with the Chinese Muslim educational network, as well as the potent life it drew from the dynamic context of Manchu rule.

ONE

The Islamic Educational Network

The Urban Context of Eastern China

The Islamic education network originated in northwestern China, where Muslims lived in large communities—many of them rural—and enjoyed somewhat closer contacts with the Muslims of Central Asia. However, it was in the large cities of eastern China, particularly those of the Jiangnan region, that the network flourished in terms of numbers of students and teachers and, more important, where it took its final shape.

The Jiangnan region was already an important commercial center during Tang and Song times, and during the Ming it became a prosperous commercial center with a high degree of urbanization. Its cities had been centers of book collecting and printing for centuries. Before, and particularly during, the early Qing, this area of cultural vitality produced more high-ranking degree holders than other regions. Modern scholars have pointed out the close overlap between the high levels, on one hand, of commercialization and urbanization and, on the other, of cultural achievement and literacy in this region.¹ This vibrant cultural milieu was also apparent in urban Muslim communities, and the emergence of the Chinese Muslim educational network seems to have been closely connected to it.

“Muslim Eastern China” thrived economically and culturally during the Ming-Qing transition and the late seventeenth century. In

1. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 8–13, 262n8.

addition to the well-known Arab and Persian merchant community in Quanzhou 泉州, there were significant Muslim merchant communities in Hangzhou 杭州, Yangzhou 揚州, and Ningbo 寧波.² The Chinese Muslim population in this region was not concentrated in large, isolated, rural communities as in the northwest or the southwest; rather, the settlement patterns were those of what Jonathan Lipman calls a “patchwork society.”³ Lipman’s term, while coined in the context of northwestern China, is apt, with some modifications, in the case of the communities of the east, where the Muslim populations also did not dwell in contiguous areas. Indeed, the educational network also served as an important means of communication among the urban Muslim communities.

Muslims arrived in Jiangnan for many different reasons and from many different places. As a result, their settlement patterns did not exhibit territorial and geographical continuity. During the early Ming, the number of Chinese Muslims in this region rose dramatically (in Nanjing, for example, from less than 10,000 to about 100,000).⁴ This growth reflects the rise of the region as an economic and commercial center. The centers of the silk industry in Suzhou 蘇州, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou drew many Chinese Muslim merchants, who settled there with their families in special quarters. There was a large Chinese Muslim community in Jiaxing 嘉興, an important commercial town south of Suzhou, and the town became home to a major mosque. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jiaxing became an important center for Islamic studies, because it was connected to Muslim communities in Nanjing, Hangzhou, and other cities along the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal and to Fujian in the south.⁵ During this period many new mosques were built in the bigger cities of Jiangnan, such as Hangzhou and Nanjing (during the early Ming Nanjing alone

2. See, e.g., *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao yanjiu lunwenxuan*. Quanzhou is a well-known and a relatively well documented case in the history of Chinese-Islamic contacts.

3. Lipman, “Patchwork Society, Network Society,” p. 250.

4. Mi, “Nanjing Huizu diyuxing lishi,” pp. 32–33; Guo, “Zhejiang Huizu,” p. 51.

5. Guo, “Yisilanjiao zai Jiaxing de chuanbo,” pp. 216–17.

had three big mosques).⁶ These mosques, my research suggests, came to serve largely as institutions of education. Saguchi Tōru has observed that mosques were the physical and ideational “nuclei” of Muslim communities, and Chen Dasheng has demonstrated that physical proximity to a mosque was an important factor in the transmission and development of a strong Muslim identity.⁷ The growth of the Chinese Muslim educational network went hand in hand with the construction, reconstruction, and expansion of mosques, particularly in urban centers. The Muslims of eastern China also enjoyed a favorable political climate. The early Ming dynasts pursued a relatively benign policy toward Muslims, particularly those who lived in nonstrategic areas such as Jiangnan, far away from the northwest. Muslims were also useful to the administration (especially the Bureau of Astronomy, dominated by Muslims since Yuan times).⁸ As a result, Nanjing, the political center during the early Ming, drew many Muslim families of merchant or military background, who joined the new administration established by the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368–98). In addition to the Bureau of Astronomy, Muslims served in other departments, functioned as envoys, and enlisted in the military (many of the soldiers in the city during the Hongwu reign were Muslims).⁹ In sharp contrast, the Muslim communities of the southwest and the northwest suffered under harsh state policies and were constantly in conflict

6. Zheng, “Jiangsu Yisilanjiao chuanbo shi fawei,” pp. 198–99.

7. Saguchi, “The Community and Religious Life of Chinese Muslims,” p. 1; Chen Dasheng, “The Role of the Mosque in the Reacceptance of Islam,” p. 22.

8. The *Huihui lifa* 回回曆法 (Muslim astronomy), in three *juan*, is included in the *Mingshi lizhi* 明史曆志 (Astronomy section), vols. 37–39 of the *Mingshi* 明史. The preface mentions the Muslim astronomers called by the Hongwu emperor to the Bureau of Astronomy in order to translate an astronomy book he had seized at the Yuan court. The only extensive work on the Muslim astronomers is Tazaka, “An Aspect of Islam Culture Introduced into China”; see also idem, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, pp. 1572–624.

9. Xue, “Mingdai yu Huimin zhi guanxi,” pp. 207–25; Rossabi, “Muslim and Central Asian Revolts,” pp. 179–82; Zheng, “Jiangsu Yisilanjiao chuanbo shi fawei,” pp. 198–99; Mi, “Nanjing Huizu diyuxing lishi,” p. 33; Lai, *Huizu shangye shi*, pp. 142–51. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, in his *Rizhilu* 日知錄, speaks of “202 Huihui people that arrived in Zhejiang in the third year of the Zhengtong 正統 era [1438]”; cited in Guo, “Zhejiang Huizu,” p. 50.

with the imperial government under the Ming. This was particularly the case during the Ming-Qing transition.¹⁰

Muslims in Jiangnan had also a higher degree of literacy, both those inside and those outside the “official” (Confucian) education system and the administration, than their fellow religionists elsewhere. It was in this region that an author could hope to find a rich Muslim merchant who might sponsor his writings and finance the publication of books. The fertile academic environment of the region (what Elman terms a climate of “cross-fertilization of ideas”)¹¹ did not exclude Muslims. In the case of Chinese Muslim intellectual elites, this fertility was characterized by the intellectual tension—not necessarily a negative one—between Islam and other trends of thought, belief, and scholarship. Thus Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and later Christianity (in the form of Jesuit missionary activities) all found representation in Nanjing.

Both chronologically and geographically, the scholarly Chinese Muslims of the early Qing found themselves favorably situated to develop literary traditions and self-perceptions that drew from many different social and cultural strands. The authors of the wide-ranging texts of the *Han Kitab* relied on numerous Islamic and Chinese sources. Most important, these texts grew out of a specific culture of literary production and were created in the context of a web of social interactions, connections, and relationships. They grew out of a network, or system, of learning.¹²

Networks of Learning

Pierre Bourdieu, who has undertaken an extensive study of the culture and systems of learning,¹³ writes: “Culture is not merely a common code or even a common catalogue of answers to recurring problems; it is a common set of *previously assimilated master pat-*

10. Rossabi, “Muslim and Central Asian Revolts.”

11. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 12.

12. Bourdieu, “Systems of Education and Systems of Thought,” p. 164.

13. See Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. For other analyses of systems of education relevant to the argument here, see Hopper, *Readings in the Theory of Educational Systems*; and Elias, “The Sociology of Knowledge.”

terns from which, by an ‘art of invention’ similar to that involved in the writing of music, an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated” (italics added).¹⁴ By this analysis, Chinese Muslim scholarly production—the *Han Kitab*—was the “individual pattern,” in terms of content, that emerged from the “master pattern,” in terms of structure, of Chinese scholarly culture.

The simultaneity of Chinese Muslim identity is signaled by the (“Chinese”) means—education and literary production—through which these (“Islamic”) scholars forged their identity. The production of the *Han Kitab* took place within the context of an educational network that in its values and organization was typical of its time and milieu; literary production of all sorts in the Qing period was closely tied to intellectual networks and communities. As has been well documented, Chinese society has, over a long span of history, placed an unusually strong emphasis on education and educational institutions.¹⁵ Several recent studies have been devoted to the topic, particularly to the almost millennium-long period up to 1905 when the Confucian civil examination system enjoyed an apparent monopoly over the institutions and symbols of learning in Chinese society. Virtually no work, however, has been undertaken on Chinese Muslim education in the premodern period;¹⁶ indeed, the very existence of anything that might be called a Chinese Muslim “system” or “network” of education has been overlooked.

This oversight, clearly, is part of a historiography that has taken Han society’s claims to an educational monopoly at face value. The fact that many Muslims were themselves products of the (Confucian) civil examination system has also caused confusion and contributed to the obscuring of a Muslim system of education that worked parallel to, and at times in tandem with, the official one directed toward the civil examinations.

14. Bourdieu, “Systems of Education and Systems of Thought,” p. 164.

15. Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 1.

16. Most previous works concerned with Chinese Muslim education were generated by missionaries, for missionary purposes; see, e.g., Broomhall, *Islam in China*, pp. 237–54.

To say that the *Han Kitab* grew out of the Chinese Muslim educational system is another way of saying that it grew out of a network and culture of learning and scholarship. In *The Sociology of Philosophies*, Randall Collins asserts that *all* literary production and knowledge arises from such networks. There is, to Collins's mind, no such thing as a truly solitary or individual intellectual creativity: "The group is present in consciousness even when the individual is alone: for individuals who are the creators of historically significant ideas, it is [the] *intellectual* community which is paramount precisely when he or she is alone."¹⁷ Intellectual creativity comes out of networks that reach across both time and space: "A pattern of creativity is intergenerational networks, chains of eminent teachers and pupils. . . . Creativity is not random among individuals; it builds up in intergenerational chains."¹⁸

Norbert Elias sums up the basic theoretical assumption to which sociologists of knowledge, like Collins and indeed like Elias himself, subscribe: "The structure of 'consciousness,' of ideas, knowledge, thought, perception, or whatever angle one may single out for attention, is primarily determined by the structure of the human groups where they are produced."¹⁹ This is an assumption to which I subscribe, and one that the community—the "human group"—that created the *Han Kitab* supports.

The lack of work on the Chinese Muslim scholarly community has resulted in the anomalous conclusion that Chinese Muslim writers worked in isolation, in a vacuum.²⁰ This study, however, suggests that Chinese Muslim scholarship took place within the context of transregional, intergenerational networks. Chinese Muslim scholars did not write alone. Consider, for example, the case of Yuan Shengzhi 袁盛之. Born during the 1620s in Nanjing, Jiangsu, Yuan traveled to Jining 濟寧, Shandong, in the mid-1640s in order to study with the great master Chang Yunhua 常蘊華 (b. ca. 1610), the cofounder of the Jining Islamic educational center. Upon his return to Nanjing, Yuan in turn founded his own school, and his

17. Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 7.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

19. Elias, "The Sociology of Knowledge," p. 149.

20. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, p. 73.

family came to be known among Chinese Muslims as the Nanjing Yuans. Yuan's son, Yuan Ruqi 袁汝奇, was his father's disciple and formed his own school, also in Nanjing, sometime around 1680. Yuan Ruqi was the teacher of Liu Zhi, the most prolific Chinese Muslim writer of the early decades of the eighteenth century and a relative by marriage to Yuan Ruqi's family. In the 1770s, Yuan Guozuo 袁國倣 (b. 1717), Yuan Ruqi's grandson and Yuan Shengzhi's great-grandson, was the publisher and editor of Liu Zhi's books.²¹ Additionally, Yuan Guozuo compiled the first bibliography of Muslim Chinese books, one that included all Muslim Chinese books written up to his time. Significantly, this bibliography not only lists the works but provides biographical information on their authors and details the relationships between each author and his teachers or intellectual associates. Although first and foremost a bibliography, Yuan's compendium can also be classified within the genre of biographical or genealogical literature, a genre that, as we will see, came to be important to the Chinese Muslim intellectual community.

Many elements constitutive of an educational network (a strong degree of overlap between kinship and discipleship in the student-teacher relationship; the gradual standardization of texts; and the participants' consciousness of membership in an established educational tradition and genealogy) are present in the case of Yuan Shengzhi and his descendants. Between the time of his birth in the early 1620s and the compilation of Yuan Guozuo's bibliography in 1778, this one family's trajectory exemplifies the growth of the Chinese Muslim educational network itself. First, this case illustrates the physical, geographic dissemination and proliferation of the network—the former in Yuan Shengzhi's return from Shandong to Nanjing and his establishment of a school there, the latter in his son's founding of a second school in Nanjing. Second, the educational tradition was passed down in the context of a master-disciple chain of transmission in which there was a strong hereditary element. Third, we see in Yuan Guozuo's bibliographic undertaking the sense of importance that Muslim Chinese intellectuals

21. We know almost nothing about Yuan Guozuo's father, Yuan Zongdai 袁宗岱. His son refers to him as his teacher, what is probably true.

placed not just upon Chinese Muslim knowledge in general but more specifically upon knowledge of themselves as a community and of their own history. Finally, the fact that this bibliographic project made use of a literary form strongly associated with the Confucian literary elite provides an important clue as to the ways in which the Muslim Chinese viewed themselves vis-à-vis that elite.

Another case in point is Ma Zhu 馬注, born ca. 1620 in Yunnan. After finishing his *magnum opus*, *Qingzhen zhinan* 清真指南 (Guide [or compass] to Islam; 1680), which became one of the central texts of the *Han Kitab*, Ma Zhu visited several Muslim educational centers—among them Jining (Shandong) and Nanjing—teaching, and perhaps promoting, his book and meeting with other Muslim scholars. While visiting these centers, Ma Zhu collected “greetings” (*zengyan* 贈言) for his book from the scholars he met. These greetings, twenty-four in number, were gathered or sent to him from several locations throughout China and consist of short poems praising the book and its author.²² Among the authors of these greetings were Yuan Ruqi and Liu Sanjie 劉三傑 (father of Liu Zhi, perhaps the key scholar of this tradition), as well as Li Yanling 李延齡, the cofounder of the Chinese Muslim educational center in Jining and also Yuan Shengzhi’s teacher. Other authors were also known teachers or scholars (a point to which I return below).

Here again we see the same elements of overlap between the master-pupil relationship and kinship and specialization across a broad geographical area in a shared body of literature. The Chinese Muslim intellectual climate surrounding the completion and publication of this major Chinese Islamic work was characterized by a widespread and interconnected group of scholars, scholarly institutions, and writings. It is clear that Ma understood himself as part of a network, or community, of learning and scholarship. The fact that he was so readily able to collect encomia from numerous scholars familiar with and interested in his work is one indication that he defined himself as a participant in a well-established intellectual community, one that was unified by shared intellectual interests, educational pedigree, and, in many instances, kinship as

22. The *zengyan* section appears in all versions of Ma’s book issued since 1683.

well. It was a community that also reflected the general cultural emphasis on a communal tradition of scholarly production.

Clients and Constituents

Through their writings, the scholars of the *Han Kitab* were engaged in a dialogue with one another, with past scholarship, and with their students. These scholars constituted what Collins calls the “Inner Core” of the network.²³ They remained close—literally and intellectually—to one another and worked in concert. They were, however, also supported by and in contact with many other individuals—publishers, financial backers, philanthropists, editors, students, and countless others who made up what I refer to in this study as a “constituency.” This constituency was the “audience and would-be recruits,”²⁴ to quote Collins again, a major sector of the network to which the *Han Kitab* texts spoke.²⁵ Writing on the connections between writing, constituencies, and communities in the contemporary United States, Edward Said explains it best: “A constituency is principally a clientele: people who use (and perhaps buy) your services because you and others belonging to your guild are certified experts.”²⁶

The constituency of the Chinese Muslim scholarly community was not “the Muslims of China” as a whole. Rather, it consisted of numerous individuals whose historical (familial) and cultural circumstances led them to value Chinese Muslim scholarship and learning. These individuals served in various ways as leaders in a more general sense of Chinese Muslim communities. Yet their ac-

23. Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, p. 43.

24. Ibid.

25. Again, I am indebted to Pamela Crossley’s agility in finding new categories of interpretation for Chinese history. In a paper on “rulership” and “imperial universalisms,” she writes: “I call the constructed audiences to which the multiple imperial personae addressed themselves ‘constituencies’” (Crossley, “Imperial Universalisms,” p. 7). Crossley stresses that “constituencies” are constructions that are shifting in their “historical [and] cultural content” and should not be equated with the term “peoples.” Although she is referring to a quite different phenomenon, her application of the term is helpful because it reaches beyond the scope denoted by other collectives, such as “peoples,” and I have adapted it for my use here.

26. Said, “Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community,” p. 139.

tivities were *not* invariably circumscribed by Islam or “Muslimness.”²⁷ The Chinese Muslim scholarly network’s constituency was tied together by various ties, including shared intellectual outlook, kinship, friendship, patronage and clientelism, geography, pedagogy, master-disciple relations, and collegiality.

Genealogy and Learning

The backbone of this chapter is a new piece of evidence for Qing-era Chinese Islam in general and the *Han Kitab* in particular. This is a text of twenty-six *juan* (and three appendixes), composed during the 1670s in Kaifeng 開封. It is entitled the *Jingxue xi chuan pu* 經學系傳譜, which translates as *Register of Lineage and Transmission of Classical Learning* or, more simply if not quite accurately, a *Genealogy of Classical Learning* (hereafter the *Genealogy*). The text provides a genealogy of Muslim Chinese scholarship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Perhaps significantly, the title does not allude to Islam but defines its subject simply as *jingxue* 經學, “classical learning.”

In 1987 the director of the Chinese Islamic Classical Studies Institute, Yang Yongchang, discovered the *Genealogy* in a mosque at Beijing.²⁸ Its author, Zhao Can 趙燦, was a disciple of a great (but hitherto almost unknown) teacher, She Yunshan 舍蘊善, who lived and taught in Kaifeng and in other locations in central-eastern and northeastern China throughout much of the seventeenth century. She guided the project of his disciple and contributed a preface (dated 1697) to the text.²⁹ Yang Yongchang, together with Ma Jizu, transcribed and punctuated the manuscript, which was pub-

27. Furthermore, some (very few) members of the constituency were not Muslims, but members of other scholarly elites. (I have found evidence for about ten such individuals; as to how many there actually were I cannot speculate.)

28. I thank Professor Yang Yongchang for letting me photocopy some of the pages from the original text.

29. She Yunshan, “Xu,” in *JXCP*, pp. 1–2. See also pp. 1–2 of the editor’s introduction to this text (the introduction is separately paginated from the text proper). Several other prefaces were added to the text; the latest dates to 1714. Unfortunately the information in the *Genealogy* stops at around 1677. Hereafter the *JXCP* will be cited in the text.

lished in 1989. So far, however, the content of this text has never been studied.³⁰

The *Genealogy* is a treasure trove of new information regarding a scholarly movement involving thousands of people over a period of almost 150 years, from about 1550 to 1700. Zhao Can, a native of Changzhou 長州, Jiangsu, tells us that he traveled and studied in all “four corners” (*sifang* 四方) of China, a claim that, if true, made him the perfect historian for the network. First and foremost, the *Genealogy* provides biographical details for a number of centrally important teachers and scholars. Zhao counts twenty-five major teachers from the time of the first teacher, Hu Taishi 胡太師 or Grand Teacher Hu, to his own, and dedicates separate sections to each. Each chapter provides basic biographical and pedagogical details (under the rubric *puxi* 譜系) such as place of birth, kin and intellectual relationships with other teachers, and the place or places where each master teacher taught. Also included is a list of each teacher’s disciples who themselves became teachers; Zhao commented on each person’s particular abilities or character. This section of the chapter is entitled *chuan* 傳 (transmission) and, significantly, is attached to the *puxi* section. In the event that the person mentioned authored a book, its title is listed beside his name. One such example is a certain Ma Boliang 馬伯良, of Jining, who translated a book entitled *Jiaokuan jieyao* 教款捷要 (Comprehensive summary of articles of the teaching; dated 1678) (*JXCP*, p. 55). Similarly, if a disciple founded a school or a mosque, this information is provided as well. For example, one Quan Mingyi 全明一, of Wuchang 武昌, Hubei, a student in the school in Jining, “founded the Great Eastern Willow Road Mosque of Jining” (創立濟寧柳行東大寺) (*JXCP*, p. 55).³¹

30. Recent monographs published in China such as Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi* (History of Chinese Islam), and Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui’s *Yisilanjiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* (Islam and Chinese culture) use the *Genealogy* to a rather limited extent, mainly in order to document and annotate what was already known regarding major educational figures in Chinese Islam.

31. For more details on this mosque, known today simply as the Eastern Great Mosque of Jining (Jining dong dasi 濟寧東大寺), see Liu Zhiping, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao jianzhu*, pp. 82–91. The author provides a fragment of the stele that connects Chang Yunhua, Quan’s teacher, to the establishment of the mosque.

Zhao repeatedly states that in addition to the disciples listed by name, there were countless others who did not go on to be teachers but nevertheless received formal training of some sort. Those whose names appear in Zhao's lists of disciples had reached either the "intermediate" (*zhongxue* 中學) or the third, *shi* 師 (teacher) level. Particularly important teachers are labeled *xiansheng* 先生. About 10 percent of those listed are characterized as *zhongxue*.

Zhao supplies lengthy narrative biographies for each teacher, describing the individual's childhood and explaining how each reached the decision to become a teacher. He includes important sayings that each teacher was known to have uttered, poems written about or by them, and, in many cases, a transcription of the epitaph on the teacher's tombstone. This information constitutes the main part of each chapter and is entitled *jishi* 紀事 (anecdotes), that is, records of "happenings and occurrences" relating to the teacher in question. In some cases, particularly with teachers who had many disciples, Zhao added another section, *menren jishi* 門人紀事, "stories relating to [prominent] disciples."³² In addition, Zhao added a detailed introduction (*fanli* 凡例), which includes an explanation of how to use the *Genealogy* and understand its "correct meaning" (*zhengyi* 正義), discusses the different parts of the text, and explains its structure (*JXCP*, pp. 23–26).³³ Zhao also provides a chart (*zongtu* 總圖) that graphs the relations between teachers (*JXCP*, p.22).³⁴ Finally, the *Genealogy* contains two supplements (*fu* 附). One discusses three teachers who were not included in the main body of the text (*JXCP*, pp. 106–11); the other provides the lyrics of eight mosque canticles (*jingtang bayong* 經堂八詠) (*JXCP*, pp. 116–99). Finally, there are eight lengthy prefaces (*xu* 敘), all but one written by Zhao, attached to the text (*JXCP*, pp. 2–23).³⁵

32. This occurs three times, in the cases of the master teachers Feng Shaoquan 馮少泉, Zhang Shaoshan 張少山, and Feng Tongyu 馮通宇 (respectively, *JXCP*, pp. 37–38, 43, 77–79). All three teachers had many disciples.

33. The text is entitled "Jingxue xi zhuanpu yuepu zhengyi fanli" 請學系傳譜閱譜正義凡例 (Introduction and a review of the correct meaning [of the text]).

34. "Xi chuan zongtu" 系傳總圖 (Overall chart of ties and transmission).

35. Prefaces were composed whenever the *Genealogy* was presented to a new school.

Such painstaking attention to detail suggests that Zhao considered the documentation of Chinese Muslim knowledge to be an extremely important activity. She Yunshan, who envisioned the project, and Zhao, who carried it out, wanted to ensure that future generations would have an understanding of the origins and history of their profession. It was important to them that later scholars know that classical (Islamic) learning had been studied and circulated in China over a long period of time. In his preface to the *Genealogy*, She speaks of the immediate reason for its composition: the pressing necessity to preserve, remember, and save “from oblivion” the memory of the past generations of scholars and teachers.

There are many [scholars] whose surnames we know, but whose style names or posthumous names we do not know, and there are others of whom we know but do not know what their native place was. Alas! How could we let [these scholars] fall into oblivion?” 有人知姓而不知字諱知人而不知鄉貫豈可聽其湮沒哉³⁶

Perhaps the political and military turmoil of the seventeenth century contributed to this sense of the need to preserve the memory of past generations of scholars. In this respect, this Muslim genealogy is but one instance of the intensive anthologizing projects and genealogical discourse among the general Chinese literate population of the period. Such activities were, in part, a reaction to the political and social upheavals in the wake of the fall of Ming dynasty.³⁷ Possibly in this particular case, the various Muslim revolts of the period were a contributing factor to growing sense of anxiety about the loss of tradition.

So important was the text that Zhao even discusses the various places where copies of it were kept. “Originally, I made two copies of this genealogy” (此譜原稿兩本), says Zhao. “One [kept] at Master She’s home and the other one [with me] in a bamboo box. . . . [I later] made two more copies: one [kept] at the Yuan home in the southern part [of the network] (*nanbu* 南部 [i.e., Nanjing and its vicinity]), and one kept in Yan [Beijing] at the Jin home” (*JXCP*, p. 25). This arrangement would explain why more prefaces were

36. She Yunshan, “Xu,” in *ibid.*, p. 2.

37. Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*, pp. 70–97; Wilson, *Genealogy of The Way*.

added over the years after the initial composition of the *Genealogy*. More important, it reveals something about the geographical boundaries of the network toward the end of the seventeenth century: Kaifeng in the west, Beijing in the north, and Nanjing in the south. It is clear also that there was a demand for the *Genealogy* and that the author made sure that copies were available in other central locations.

Thus, from the standpoint of the “singular” trajectory of the history of the Chinese Muslim intellectual tradition, it is also clear that the composition of the *Genealogy* marks a historical moment characterized by Chinese Muslim scholarly self-consciousness and a time of assessment and renegotiation of identity. For the specific group of Chinese Muslims connected to the scholarly network, the negotiation of identity was accomplished entirely through the preservation and production of “traditional” knowledge and the codified “memory” of the Muslim community as a scholarly one.

Evidently the *Genealogy*’s author felt that his own work was an important link in the project of preservation. Zhao wrote as a member of the community about which he was writing. He was not in any way an outside observer of it and viewed his project not as a sort of anthropological chronicle but as a part of the very knowledge he aimed to preserve. Not once in the eight prefaces that Zhao supplied for his work did he refer to Islam by that name; rather, he always called it “our teachings” (*wujiao* 吾教) or “our Dao” (*wudao* 吾道) (*JXCP*, pp. 3–21).³⁸ Zhao himself, his subject matter, and at least a part of his audience were all members of the same group, which was not simply a group of “Muslims,” but a group of scholars tied to a specific body of knowledge. Thus, a critical facet of the Chinese Muslim literary elite’s intellectual project was self-documentation. To write the history of the community was an important way of participating in and propagating it.

By Zhao’s time, a central feature of Muslim Chinese literary knowledge was knowledge of the community itself. In addition to a quasi-canonical body of literary works, Chinese Muslim intellectuals were expected to be familiar with their own origins, lineage, and genealogy. In his prefaces, Zhao repeatedly conveyed one clear

38. These terms occur constantly.

message: learning (*xue* 學) alone is the way to achieve perfection (*zhong* 終). The purpose of the *Genealogy* is to

teach and exhort the younger generations of the numerous followers of our Dao, to accompany and teach them, so [they will be able to] well restrain their many desires and complete their ability to affirm the Dao of the True and One³⁹; then they will all lessen their desires and possess their perfection! 訓誨吾道之多人而偕學之則亦窒其多欲而終能證真一之道則寡其欲而有其終矣 (*JXCP*, p. 5)⁴⁰

Quite aside from the striking use of the term “Dao,” to which we shall return, this passage illustrates Zhao’s understanding of the centrality of scholarly learning to individual betterment.⁴¹

Zhao worked on his genealogy for more than seventeen years. It provides an unprecedented depiction of one aspect of Chinese Muslim life in the early Qing period and provides it from the point of view of Chinese Muslims themselves. The *Genealogy* is a crucial source of information on Chinese Muslim education and scholarly identity. It also teaches us a great deal about the network that created it and in which it was embedded.

The Nature of the Network

Sometime around the mid-sixteenth century, Chinese Muslims established the first school in what by 1610 bore all the hallmarks of a full-blown and transregional educational network. Over the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this network evolved and grew, not only in terms of sheer number of students but also, and more important, in terms of its structure and the intensification of contacts among locales, provinces, and regions.

39. God, or Allah, appears here in one of the most frequent Chinese Islamic renderings *Zhenyi* 真一 (the True and One). This form appeared for first time in the writings of the earliest Chinese Islamic author, Wang Daiyu (on whom, see below). For an explication of the term as used in Wang’s writings, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, p. 93.

40. Zhao, “Jingxue xi chuan zongpu xu” 經學系傳宗譜敘 (Preface to the *Genealogy of Transmission and Lineage of Classical Learning*), dated 1714. (Here the title given the text is slightly different [宗譜-zongpu]).

41. This is, of course, a clear example of adopting and adapting a central, if not the central, Confucian value.

The pivotal transformation, which occurred in the seventeenth century, in this system's emergence was a shift in which Islamic communities ceased to revolve solely around religious activities and leaders (imams)⁴² and began instead to produce lay scholars, who, although they could also function as imams,⁴³ were primarily teachers and scholars. This shift led to the rapid production, expansion, and dissemination of Islamic scholarly knowledge—activities those involved viewed as central to their role. This is best characterized as a transformation from imam to *jingshi* 經師 (classical teacher), *xuezhe* 學者 (scholar), or *shi* 士 (literatus).⁴⁴ A religious category, then, was converted into a fundamentally scholarly one. This change can be seen as part of the scholarly revolution occurring across early Qing intellectual society as late Ming institutions reached maturity.

The initial dissemination of this network was remarkably rapid. By the early decades of the seventeenth century, we find clear evidence of its existence throughout northern and southeastern China. By the mid-seventeenth century, four defined educational capitals had emerged: Xi'an 西安 in Shaanxi; Jining in Shandong; Kaifeng in Henan; and Nanjing in Jiangsu. Additionally, the system had many smaller educational centers in such locations as Gansu (and its northern part, Ningxia),⁴⁵ Anhui, and Zhejiang.

From the time of its establishment, the Islamic education network tended to grow in an eastward direction. Its expansion took place in three basic stages, as the network grew from its initial center in the Xi'an area in northwest China to the Shandong peninsula in the northeast and then to Nanjing in the Yangzi Delta.⁴⁶ Generally speaking, the network first spread within northwestern China, in the areas of Shaanxi and Gansu; then moved to the

42. In that period the more common term for *imam* was the Persian *abong* (in Chinese 阿衡 or sometimes 阿洪).

43. Only one of them, Feng Tongyu, is mentioned as someone who certainly functioned as an imam.

44. Chinese Muslim scholars referred to themselves in these terms.

45. For the sake of greater precision and because of its centrality, I hereafter refer to Ningxia as a separate province. Prior to the twentieth century, Ningxia was the name for Yinchuan, later the capital of Ningxia province.

46. See Fig. A1 in the Appendix.

northeast, mainly Shandong and Henan, with Hebei as a significant source of disciples; finally, around the mid-seventeenth century, it spread to the Jiangnan area, with Nanjing as its main educational center. The first schools in what would become the Chinese Islamic educational network, then, were founded in Xianning 咸寧 near Xi'an, and for the latter half of the sixteenth century Muslim education was for the most part available only in the west. These schools attracted Islamic scholars from throughout China. As time passed, however, those who had come from the east returned home and established their own educational institutions there.

This far-flung network of educational institutions, teachers, and disciples was not entirely casual, ad hoc, or informal. The intensive and direct contact between teachers and disciples, a relationship that in many instances also involved kinship; the relatively high degree of standardization of Islamic texts (in Arabic, Persian, and, later, in Chinese) taught and studied at schools in different locations in China; and the attitude of its members at the end of the seventeenth century—by which time they clearly felt themselves to be participants in an established lineage of intellectuals specializing in Islamic knowledge—all of these indicate the existence of something best termed a “network” or a “system,” terms that imply a certain degree of interconnectedness and filiation.

The existence of an extensive, interregional, semi-formalized, and institutionally complex Chinese Muslim educational network demonstrates that Islam not only survived on Chinese soil but developed its own—distinctively Chinese Muslim—institutions, values, and ideals. Islam did not survive in isolated pockets but was both formalized and fluid.⁴⁷

The Chinese Muslim educational network was porous in its makeup. No “official” examinations were associated with it; there is no evidence that graduates of its schools received a formal certificate or degree. The curriculum in the various schools of the network was, however, fairly uniform, and its members, however separated in distance, were interconnected in myriad ways and were in con-

47. That this network was established only centuries after the arrival of Islam in China further complicates the timeline of supposed “sinicization.”

stant intellectual dialogue with one another. The network consisted of teachers, translators, authors, grammarians, and students; its clientele included publishers, editors, patrons, and benefactors. The system of education around which the network coalesced was geographically widespread, but by the first half of the seventeenth century it exhibited a fairly high degree of organization.

The premodern Chinese Islamic educational system came to be known within Chinese Muslim tradition as the *jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育 (scripture hall [i.e., mosque] education).⁴⁸ The most striking feature of the network is that for at least 250 years Chinese Muslim scholarship was invariably connected to the Chinese Muslim educational apparatus and its clientele. The Chinese Muslim scholarly elite of the period used education and scholarship as a means of negotiating their identity as a traditional scholarly elite in a society that valued tradition and scholarship above all else.

Largely for evidentiary reasons and partly for interpretive ones, little secondary literature has been written about Chinese Muslim scholarly activity per se, and nothing has been written about the educational network. Because of these gaps in the historiography of Chinese Muslims, I provide a detailed look at their scholarly activity in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This information is drawn from the recently discovered genealogy, but much of it can be corroborated in and checked against other primary sources—the texts of the *Han Kitab*, the tombstones of the scholars in question, and mosque steles, for example.

Key Teachers in the Network

Two general types of teachers emerge from the *Genealogy*.⁴⁹ The first consists of those who traveled as students but made their career in one location only. Such was the case, for example, with

48. This is the term used in Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, p. 505. See also Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui, *Yisilan yu Zhongguo wenhua*, p. 340.

49. I have chosen to concentrate only on several key figures who played important roles in the development of the system and who were associated with its four main educational centers or were otherwise prominent. Other teachers are presented in a comprehensive list of teachers and in charts describing the relations between them; both are based on information provided by Zhao's *Genealogy*.

Grand Teacher Hu himself and Chang Yunhua, both of whom established their own school, where they remained for most of their life. The second type was itinerant, traveling from place to place establishing new schools⁵⁰ or moving from one existing school to another. The quintessential figure in this group is She Yunshan, who was traveled actively throughout Hebei and Henan. For the most part, teachers in the second group circulated in eastern China, moving between schools in Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Shandong, and Jiangnan. The constant movement of these teachers was a key factor in the increasing systematization and standardization of the educational network.

It is evident that the interactions and connections of schools and teachers tended to be densest and most intensive in Jiangnan. Nanjing in particular attracted a number of teachers who settled in the city for varying periods. Such was the case, for example, of Feng Yangwu 馮養吾 (b. ca. 1576), who was born in the northwest but settled in Nanjing, where he taught for most of his life. Even though it is clear that most interactions between schools were intraregional (that is, within Jiangnan, the northwest, or the northeast), there are many instances of teachers who exemplify interregional interactions and connections. (See the Appendix for material on the network's major teachers.)

THE TAISHI: HU DENGZHOU

The reputed founder of the educational network is Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 (ca. 1522–97), who appears in some sources by his style name (*zi* 字) Hu Puzhao 胡普照 (and in Arabic as Muhammad Ibrahim Ilias) from the town of Wei 魏 in Xianyang county 咸陽, Shaanxi. In this regard, the *Genealogy* is in accordance with other Chinese Muslim traditions and texts that identified a man with that name as a great Chinese Islamic teacher.⁵¹ Often referred to in the Chinese Muslim tradition as Hu Taishi,⁵² Grand Teacher Hu

50. Zhao Can frequently used the term *shezhang* 設帳 (setting up a school) in reference to many of the major teachers he discusses.

51. Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, pp. 505–6.

52. Hu's biography was published in slightly different versions in numerous places. A partial list includes Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, pp. 1358–59; Pang,

or Hu, the Teachers' Teacher, Hu was first trained in Confucian classical studies and studied the Confucian canonical texts, as well as the dynastic histories. Zhao did not record why Hu left this course of studies and did not pursue a career as an examination candidate, but he did stress Hu's early training and interest in the Confucian classics. Later Hu would emphasize the study of the Chinese classics as an important component of Islamic education in China.

Hu began his Islamic studies in the local mosque and soon became frustrated with his inability to understand the Islamic classics fully. Zhao's description of Hu's career as a student reveals that an earlier form of Islamic education had employed a dialogic method. Hu studied with an elderly man in the mosque, and the lessons were based on questions and answers relating to the texts studied (*JXCP*, p. 26).

These were difficult years for northwestern Chinese Muslims. Because of new policies imposed by the Ming regime, they gradually lost contact with the Muslim communities in Central Asia west of the Chinese border. Although China and Central Asia had maintained intensive trade and diplomatic relations during the early years of the Ming, from the second half of the fifteenth century these relations began a rapid decline. The shift in Ming and Central Asian relations was marked by an embarrassing (to China) event known as the Tumu Incident ("debacle" would be more accurate). In July 1449, at Tumu in what is now Inner Mongolia, Oyrat Mongol warriors defeated a Ming army of 500,000 men, killed its commander, and captured the emperor.⁵³ After this episode, one of the more awkward ones in Ming history, there was a decline in trade and diplomatic relations, and the Ming clashed frequently with central Asian local rulers, among them the rulers of Muslim cities. In 1465, for instance, the emperor limited ambassadorial missions from Turfan to only one every three years and allowed the entry of only ten men for each mission. Furthermore, the Ming

"Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu," p. 1025; Fu, *Zhongguo Huijiao shi*, pp. 104-5; Bai, "Zhongguo Yisilan jingshizhuan," pp. 401-2; Jin Yijiu, "Gulanjing zai Zhongguo."

53. For a general account of Ming relations with Inner Asia, see Rossabi, "The Ming and Inner Asia." For the Tumu incident, see *ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

court accused the northwestern Chinese Muslim communities of collaborating with Central Asian Muslim rulers and prohibited trade between the two areas.⁵⁴

These restrictions and the intensifying tensions between the Ming and Central Asia led to a further decline of the northwestern Muslim communities. Particularly damaging was the severing of relations with the Muslim communities in Central Asia, which had served as an important source not only of wealth but also of cultural and religious life.⁵⁵ Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the population of the northwest suffered from isolation, bad administration, and deteriorating economic conditions.⁵⁶ This was particularly the case in Shaanxi, the home region of Hu Taishi.⁵⁷

Zhao's account of Hu Taishi's life reflects these conditions and links them to a parallel decline in education. Both underlay Hu's decision to leave China. In Hu's time, says Zhao, "there was a shortage of books [and] learned men were few and far between and the transmission and interpretation [of the texts] were not clear" 經文匱乏學人寥落既傳譯之不明. Having failed to achieve textual mastery, Hu decided to leave China and travel the Muslim world seeking knowledge. He first journeyed through Central Asia studying and collecting Islamic books. In a Central Asian city, Hu encountered "an old man wearing a turban" 纏頭老者 who came from Mecca; Hu studied with him for several years. (As we shall see, the image of the turbaned old man is a common one to Chinese Muslim foundational myths and histories.) Eventually the old man suggested that Hu go and seek knowledge in Mecca, which he did. After several years in Mecca, he returned to China (*JXCP*, p. 27).

Hu's return marks a turning point in Chinese Islamic education. Clearly under the influence of his experiences in Mecca, and probably also Medina, Hu established a new method of teaching: *jingtang jiaoyu*.⁵⁸ A key feature of this innovation was its increasing

54. Rossabi, "Muslim and Central Asian Revolts," pp. 176–77.

55. Northwestern Chinese imams either came from or trained in Central Asia; see Bai, "Zhongguo Yuan-Ming shi (1280–1661) jige alin."

56. Rossabi, "Muslim and Central Asian Revolts," pp. 185–87.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 187.

58. Mosques were understood as primarily serving not as sites for worship but for study. Zhao often refers to the actual school as *xuetang* 學堂 (learning

inclination toward standardization and organization. Hu introduced a new curriculum, established a financial system to support schools, and brought Chinese into the classroom. In addition, he established a modular course of studies made up of three different levels. His most significant move was to emphasize the transmission and development of knowledge and learning, and not only on the training of imams (*JXCP*, pp. 28–29).

Zhao Can's story of Hu Taishi resembles other narratives that existed among Chinese Muslim communities and in particular among teachers and scholars.⁵⁹ Of particular note is the carefully crafted picture of a well-rounded scholar, versed in Confucian study and well traveled within the Chinese world but yearning for an Islamic education of a sort unavailable in China at the time. The narrative tells us that the founder of the Chinese Muslim educational system was born in China, where he was trained in the Confucian classics and mastered them. In order to complete his learning, however, he also needed a specifically Muslim education. He consequently traveled to the site of Islam's genesis on the advice of a mysterious old man. The author made sure that the "Muslimness" of this old man was clear to the reader—hence the deliberate mention of the turban.⁶⁰ More significant, the turban implies a status of learnedness and connection to tradition. What is lacking in China is not Muslims or Islam but Islamic education and access to learned Muslim knowledge. Thus the life story of the founder of the Chinese Muslim educational system exemplifies the subsequent self-perception of the community of Chinese Muslim scholars: they understood themselves as native Chinese, whose belief system did not make them foreign, but whose source of scholarly knowledge about that belief system initially came from outside China.

hall). Most Chinese mosques were located in a compound with several buildings or halls; see Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, pp. 506–7.

59. For an account of Hu's life is based on knowledge that was preserved in his own school, see Pang, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu."

60. Mentions of "turbaned men" and other Chinese Muslim stereotypes of the Islamic world (facial features, etc) are common in Chinese Muslim stories. Chinese Muslims, it seems, simply copied Chinese depictions of Muslims from outside China. It is noteworthy that in the Muslim world the wearing of a turban was a mark of learnedness, much as a cap in China was the mark of literati status.

Although Hu Taishi is presented by Zhao and others as the founder of Chinese Islamic scholarly tradition, he also is depicted as one figure in a long chain of transmission stretching far back into the Muslim past. In 1710, a new tombstone was made for Hu Taishi in Xianyang, and an inscribed tablet was commissioned for the rededication of Hu's tomb.⁶¹ Its inscription summarizes the long line of "transmission of the Dao through the sages and teachers, from Adam in Tianfang (Arabia) through Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus . . . over 600 years up to Muhammad" (人祖阿丹生於天方國開創吾教之道統 . . . 越六百余年而有穆罕默得應運而興焉).⁶² It identifies Hu Taishi as the founder of the education system, following a long period with no adequate teachers, and describes him as having come to earth in fulfillment of nothing less than heavenly decree (天運循環無往不復而有明嘉靖元年胡太師祖出焉).⁶³ As the critical link tying Western Islam to the origins of a specifically Chinese tradition of Islamic scholarship, Hu, by 1710, enjoyed an elevated status within the Chinese Muslim tradition. A status that warranted treatment of tombstone as a sacred ground, resembling the cult of Confucius, of whom the *Lunyu* (3.24) says: "Heaven mandates that Kongzi will create the regulation to order the world."⁶⁴

THE HAIS OF XIANYANG

Hu Taishi had ten sons, but his three central disciples, of whom two continued his legacy, were not related to him. The first was Hai Xiansheng 海先生 (Zhao did not provide his full name), a native of Xianyang, Hu's hometown (*JXCP*, pp. 26, 30–31). Hai was apparently Hu's first student, and Zhao reported that in Hai's own time he was recognized as Hu's direct successor: "[As for] the Dao of our teaching, Hu turned it over to Hai" 吾教之道胡歸于海矣 (*JXCP*, p. 31). Hai and his son and disciple Hai Wenxuan 海文軒

61. "Xiujian Hu Taishizu jiacheng ji" 修建胡太師祖佳城記 (Record of the reconstruction of the gravesite of the Founding Grand Teacher Hu), in *HRZ (Ming-dai)*, pp. 404–7. This tablet was discovered and studied only in 1981.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 405.

64. Wilson, "Ritualizing Confucius," p. 49.

established their own school in Tongxin 通心, in what in 1928 was to become the province of Ningxia.⁶⁵ Hai Wenxuan did not have children (a fact lamented in the text; *JXCP*, p. 31), but his school in Tongxin became the most important Muslim educational center in northwestern China. Over the years it produced a number of eminent teachers; it became particularly important during the nineteenth century when a teacher there named Zhou Laoye 周老爺, the Venerable Zhou, established what came to be known as the Shaanxi faction in Chinese Islamic education.⁶⁶

Zhao enumerated specific students whose devotion to their teacher was such that they enjoyed a special status in the lineage of Chinese Islamic learning. In Hai's case, this was a disciple surnamed Huang 黄 from Diannan 滇南 (Yunnan) who was particularly devoted to his teacher (which might explain his sobriquet, *Huang Guanhai* 黄觀海 "Huang, Who Looks to [emulates] Hai"). Huang returned from his studies to serve as imam in Yunnan and, upon the completion of his pedagogy under Hai, established a school and named it after his teacher: Wang Hai lou 望海樓 (Looking to Hai Building). Zhao says that in his time the remains of the building still existed (*JXCP*, p. 33). According to Zhao, Hai did not have a son to succeed him, but two of his disciples, Teacher Guo 郭師 from Linqing 臨清 (Shandong)⁶⁷ and Teacher Ma 馬師 from Hangzhou (Zhejiang) married his two daughters.⁶⁸ Here we see an example of the kinship element central to the educational network's organization and development. The pattern of marrying daughters and nieces to disciples, as well as of adopting children, is evident throughout the *Genealogy*.

65. Tongxin's big mosque, the Qingzhen dasi 清真大寺, was built in the fourteenth century during the early Ming period; see Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, p. 379.

66. This matter is also not yet thoroughly researched, but this faction (which emphasized the study of Sufi texts over the Islamic Law) is mentioned in a number of articles published in the PRC by Chinese Muslim scholars; see, e.g., Sai, "Zhongguo Yisilan jingtang jiaoyu,"

67. The town of Linqing had two mosques, both built during the early Ming period; see Li Xinghua et al., *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, p. 378.

68. Both of these men completed only the intermediate (*zhongxue*) level; see *JXCP*, p. 32.

Perhaps because of the Hai family's lack of sons, the center in Tongxin was handed over to Feng Bo'an 馮伯菴, a teacher from the third generation in the *Genealogy* and an important member of the Feng lineage.

THE FENGs OF XIANNING

Hu Taishi's second disciple, Feng Xiansheng 馮先生 (fl. 1540s) of Xianning, Shaanxi, who is also known as Lao'er Baba 老二爸爸 (Elder no. 2) or simply Feng Er 馮二, is considered Hu's most important disciple and was the head of a distinguished Chinese Muslim family. The Fengs were responsible for the initial spread of the educational network elsewhere in China and played a key role in introducing more books into the curriculum and in establishing new educational centers.⁶⁹

By the time of the composition of the *Genealogy*, two members of the family—to which Zhao refers always as a *zu* 族, "clan"—were active as teachers. These are Feng Tongyu 馮通于 (fl. 1640s) and his paternal cousin Feng Yifu 馮毅福. By the time of the *Genealogy*'s composition in the late seventeenth century, the Feng clan enjoyed a great deal of prestige within the Chinese Muslim scholarly community, an observation Zhao makes in the context of mentioning these two teachers (*JXCP*, p. 31).

The Feng family originated in Xianning, about thirty *li* (approximately nineteen kilometers) east of Xi'an. Zhao was able to provide this detail, since he himself went there to obtain the family genealogy (*jiapu* 家譜) for his research (*JXCP*, p. 30).⁷⁰ The father of the clan, Feng Er, had six disciples (three were his own sons, and three were fraternal nephews, the sons of his older brother). Zhao provided a rather short account of Feng Er; Zhao attributed the

69. For Feng Er's biography and list of disciples, see *JXCP*, pp. 30–31. Pang Shiqian claims that Feng Er was the author of a book in Arabic, *Masa'il al-nahj* (Questions of the path; Chinese title, *Nazhiwen* 納直問). The book, according to Pang, includes a series of questions and answers regarding Islamic law and ritual; see Pang, "Zhongguo Huiwen daxue," p. 1026. Zhao does not mention the book in Feng's biography.

70. According to their family genealogy, the Fengs traced their history in China back to the Tang dynasty (618–907).

brevity of his account to the difficulties of reading the epitaph engraved on Feng's tomb: "day and night it appeared to have a clear mist covering it" 馮氏之墓朝暮如有晴煙而籠罩焉 (*JXCP*, p. 30). He is careful to mention, however, that as a teacher and scholar Feng was "thorough" and "perfect in virtue" (*JXCP*, p. 31).

About Feng Er's nephew, Feng Bo'an, also known as Laosan Baba 老三爸爸 (Elder no. 3), there is more information. Feng Bo'an was the first of the Fengs to travel and establish schools outside the northwest and was also the first of sufficient reputation to attract students from other regions of China. Having completed his studies with his uncle, Feng Bo'an traveled to Menghua 蒙化, Yunnan (modern Weishan 巍山),⁷¹ where he established a school; later he moved to Tongxin, Ningxia, where he took Hai Wenxuan's position. Feng Bo'an is described as a scholar who, at young age, expended painstaking efforts to meet the arduous demands of his studies. Consequently, his knowledge was profound and erudite (幼習經學而苦心力索之故學問深遠; *JXCP*, p. 34). Feng Bo'an's center in Tongxin became an important school, out of which eight major teachers emerged, among them Ma Minglong 馬明龍 (1597–1679; see below), and Zhang Xingsi 張行四 (see Appendix).

Feng Shaochuan 馮少川 (b. ca. 1570), Feng Er's first son, was, like his cousin, an important teacher. He was the first of Fengs to be active in the eastern China, particularly in the Kaifeng area but also in Jiangnan and Nanjing. Feng Shaochuan completed his studies with his father at Xianning and then traveled eastward, a choice perhaps based on the fact that his cousin had his own center in the northwest. Feng Shaochuan had only three disciples, but his contribution to Islamic education in the east is crucial. Shortly after his arrival in Kaifeng, Feng founded a school there. Zhao mentions that there were seventy-two students in the school during Feng's time, all "prominent" members of the Kaifeng Muslim community. Indeed, it was at the invitation of the Muslim community of Kaifeng that Feng Shaochuan established a school in the city (*JXCP*, p. 35).

Zhao mentions that he, too, had no children of his own and had only three disciples—his adoptive son, Feng Yangwu; Zhang Shao-

71. The mosque in Weishan was built during the Hongwu reign era (1368–98).

shan 張少山 of Shandong; and one *zhongxue* (intermediate) named Ba 把, who later completed his studies in Nanjing under Feng Yangwu and established a school in the remote western province of Qinghai (*JXCP*, pp. 35–36). Feng Shaochuan's school in Kaifeng became another important educational center and drew many students from all over north and eastern China. From the time of its establishment in the late sixteenth century to the time of Zhao's *Genealogy*, the school produced fifty-three teachers, almost one-fifth of the total number of teachers in the educational system. It was the first important school established in eastern China by teachers from the northwest.

Feng Er's second son, Feng Shaoquan 馮少泉, headed north, founding a school in Yujia 于家, Gansu. Although little is known about his own career, we do know that his disciples went on to become central figures in the spread of the educational system. Of his four disciples, three became very important. These were Ma Minglong, who began his studies with Feng Bo'an and completed them in Yujia under Feng Shaoquan; Ma Shiying 馬世英; and Feng's son, Feng Yangwu (*JXCP*, pp. 36–37).

Feng Yangwu, Feng Shaoquan's son and Feng Er's grandson, was adopted⁷² at a young age by his childless uncle Feng Shaochuan and traveled with him eastward; after studying in Kaifeng, he moved to Zhangjiawan 張家灣, a village near Beijing, where he taught in a mosque. He later moved south to Nanjing and established a school there, thus turning the city into the second important educational center in central eastern China (*JXCP*, pp. 38–40).

Feng Yangwu was a bright child; it is said that at the age of seven he was able to recite anything he had read just once.⁷³ Due to

72. This may account for the character *yang* 養 in his name.

73. Zhao (*JXCP*, p. 38) used a phrase taken from Chinese gentry discourse to describe this phenomenal memory, *guomu chengsong* 過目成誦 (being gifted with extraordinarily powerful memory; being able to recite what one has heard only once). The phrase appears also in a fiction by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646) to describe Su Shi's genius (天資高妙過目成誦出口成章 "[His] genius is ingenious, being able to recite whatever he has read once and talking beautifully too"). A close version of this phrase with similar meaning is *guomu bu wang* 過目不忘 (being able to remember everything one has seen) appears in the *Jinshu* 晉書—[花融載記]: 耳聞成誦過目不忘 ([he] hears and is able to recite from memory; sees and does not forget). It is not clear, however, to what kind of texts Zhao was re-

his talents and remarkable erudition, Feng Yangwu became a teacher at a very young age and was known for his thorough pedagogy. The Feng lineage was temporarily broken when Feng Yangwu's son, Feng Jingshan 馮敬山, died in childhood of sickness (*JXCP*, p. 38). Toward the second half of the seventeenth century, however, we encounter Feng Yangwu's grandson Feng Tongyu 馮通宇 studying in Jining, Shandong, and later teaching and establishing a school in Hechuan 河川, Gansu. Like his grandfather, Feng Tongyu was a talented scholar. He completed his studies in five years and was known to have a good command of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese classical texts (*JXCP*, p. 74). Feng Tongyu had six disciples who later became teachers, and his school hosted more than 300 students (*JXCP*, p. 76).

The educational centers established by the Fengs in northwestern China, specifically those in Xianning and Tongxin, remained active but diminished in importance as more teachers and disciples concentrated in the areas of eastern China, particularly in Jining, Kaifeng, and Nanjing. Not until the end of the eighteenth century did the northwestern schools re-emerge as important educational centers. This re-emergence was prompted by the appearance of a new charismatic figure, Zhou Laoye, in the northwest.⁷⁴

One important teacher associated with the Fengs is Ma Minglong. Ma was a disciple of both Feng Shaochuan and Feng Bo'an and was born in Wuchang (today a part of Wuhan). Ma was the founder of the school in Wuchang, which rose during his own time to become one of the most important Islamic educational centers. We have accurate biographical data regarding him since his tombstone in Wuchang remained intact until the nineteenth century; the texts engraved on it were recorded by the nineteenth-century Muslim biographer Lan Zixi 籃子義 in 1852.⁷⁵

ferring here, Islamic or Chinese. Likely he had both in mind. Regardless, the reference shows Zhao's familiarity with both Chinese literary and classical texts.

74. Wang Yongliang, "Huizu jingtang jiaoyu de chansheng ji zaoji xingtai."

75. Lan Zixi was a native of Wuchang, Ma Minglong's native place. In 1852 he published a multivolume book entitled *Tianfang zhengxue* 天方正學 (The correct learning of Islam). The seventh volume includes biographies of some Chinese Muslims, most from Lan's time and region. Most of the information in the biographies was recovered from tombstones he examined. The book was published

Ma's family had originated in Fengyang 風陽 prefecture in Anhui. In 1431 Ma's ancestor Ma Juntiao 俊調 was appointed military commander (*zhìhuī* 指揮) of the area and settled in Wuchang. While still a young child, Ma Minglong began his studies of Chinese classics as well as Persian and Arabic texts. He was educated at home and was probably meant to pursue a career as an examination candidate. Ma chose instead to pursue the career of an Islamic scholar and went to Shaanxi—first to Xianyang, where he studied with Feng Bo'an, and then to Tongxin, where he studied with Feng Shaochuan. After six years of study, he returned to his hometown and there established a school. Among his various accomplishments, Ma Minglong authored two books in Chinese. He also had a number of great disciples. Among them were his son Ma Fanglong 馬房龍, as well as Huangfu Jing 皇甫經 from Yue (Guangdong). The *Genealogy* provides accounts of both.

THE SCHOOL IN

JINING, SHANDONG

The Islamic education network underwent a significant expansion during the mid-seventeenth century when Chang Yunhua (also known in other records as Chang Zhimei 常志美) established a school in Jining, Shandong (*JXCP*, pp. 54–65). He was apparently the child or the grandchild of Samarkandian merchants who had accompanied a tribute mission delivering a lion to the Ming court.⁷⁶ Hiroshi Watanabe, in his index of embassies and tribute missions from Islamic countries to Ming China, lists several missions from Samarkand that brought lions: three during the Chenghua 成化 era (in 1483) and three during the Hongzhi 弘治 era (in

only in 1925 by the Islamic Press of Beijing, Beijing Qingzhen chuban. Other historians of Chinese Islam include the basic information about Ma Minglong found in Lan's book; see, e.g., Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, p. 1411 (and also p. 1426n6).

76. Pang, "Zhongguo Huiwen daxue," p. 1026; Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, pp. 1358–59. This point is also supported by other Chinese Muslim historians who wrote on Chang. See Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu*, p. 202. Zhao did not refer directly to Chang's foreign origins but commented on his adoption; see *JXCP*, p. 54.

1488, 1489, and 1490). Samarkand regularly sent tribute to the Ming court until the forty-sixth year of the Wanli 萬曆 era (1618).⁷⁷

Chang's most important study companion in Jining was Li Yanling, the son of local Muslims. After spending some years in the local mosque in Jining, the two heard that the great teacher Zhang Shaoshan (who was known by then as Zhuangyuan Zhang 狀元張)⁷⁸ was teaching in Nanjing, where they later ended up spending a number of years at the school of Ma Zhenwu 馬真吾 (b. ca. 1600), Feng Yangwu's disciple (*JXCP*, p. 50).⁷⁹ So great was their appetite for learning that the two practically ran away from home. They secretly left Jining and went south to Nanjing on a rented boat (及聞狀元張先生設帳金陵乃互相密計遂賃舟偕往; *JXCP*, p. 56). After completing their studies in Nanjing, the two returned to Jining, where they established their own school. There they taught for more than forty years. This was despite the fact that there was already a Muslim school in Jining—the one, in fact, where they themselves began their own training. The school they established, however, unlike the one already extant in Jining, was connected through its founders to other Islamic centers of learning and to the broader educational system of which they were a part. Chang and Li and their school are thus representative of the increasing interconnectedness of Chinese Muslim education in the period and its development into a network.

Chang was known as an excellent lecturer and orator and used to deliver speeches in front of large audiences in the main hall of the school (*JXCP*, p. 58). In addition to the traditional sobriquet "Chang Baba" 常巴巴, or "Elder Chang," he was also nicknamed "Chang xianxue" 常仙學, "Chang the immortal scholar," in recognition of his achievements in studying and teaching the classics.⁸⁰ Chang began his teaching career in a large mosque in Jining and, at

77. Watanabe, "An Index of Embassies and Tribute Missions from Islamic Countries to Ming China," p. 308.

78. *Zhuangyuan* 狀元 was a title given the top candidate in the palace examination. Zhao's genealogy refers to several teachers as *zhuangyuan* (see below). Zhang Shaoshan was known as *Zhuangyuan Baba* 狀元爸爸 (top elder). He was the disciple of the founder of the Tongxin center, Feng Shaochuan; see *JXCP*, p. 41.

79. On the schools of Nanjing, see below.

80. *HRZ* (*Qingdai*), p. 50.

the peak of his fame, established a new school there. This school was the largest in China and included large prayer and lecture halls and a dormitory with more than 200 rooms for students (*JXCP*, p. 59).⁸¹ The money for its construction was collected from many Chinese Muslim communities in the Jining area. Apparently, money came also from Chinese Muslim officials and rich families who patronized the school and made up an important part of its constituency (*JXCP*, p. 61).

The emergence of a second education center in Jining was tied to its historical importance as a Muslim center. The area was inhabited by Muslims perhaps as early as the Southern Song period. A stele dated 1275 found in Jining speaks of one “Pu Hading” 普哈丁 (Burhan al-Din) of Yangzhou, Jiangsu, a “sixteenth-generation descendant” of the Prophet Muhammad, who visited the city in 1275 and paid a courtesy visit to the Xianhe Temple 仙鶴寺 on the Taiping 太平 bridge.⁸² From the thirteenth century on, Jining was an important Muslim commercial center. Muslim merchants who engaged in the buying, selling, and trafficking of wools, hides, and furs (later a traditional Muslim occupation) settled in the city, an important junction point on the north-south roads, especially with the development of Beijing during the Yuan and Ming dynasties.⁸³

When Chang arrived in the city, it already boasted a well-organized Muslim community with a number of mosques, in which he began his career as a teacher.⁸⁴ From about 1640 to 1681, the year of his death, Chang had fifty disciples who became teachers themselves. Of these, four—She Yingshan 舍景善, Feng Tongyu, She Yunshan, and Ma Xuxuan 馬續軒—became master teachers and later established their own schools.⁸⁵ (For Chang’s school in Jining, see the Appendix.)

81. For a description and a blueprint of the school, see Liu Zhiping, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao jianzhu*, pp. 80–81. See also HRZ (*Qingdai*), p. 51.

82. He, “Jining Huizu jiaoyushi shuyao,” p. 60.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 61; Lai, *Huizu shangye shi*, p. 136.

84. He, “Jining Huizu jiaoyushi shuyao,” p. 61.

85. List of disciples in *JXCP*, pp. 54–56. See also the Appendix.

SHE YUNSHAN AND
THE KAIFENG SCHOOL

She Yunshan, Zhao Can's teacher, was the one who conceived of the idea of compiling the genealogy of Islamic learning in China.⁸⁶ A prominent teacher and scholar, his career spanned more than forty years, and he had a hundred disciples. She's career as teacher took him to many places in eastern China, but he spent most of his life at the school in Kaifeng, and his fame rests on his career there. During his lifetime he was connected with at least twenty-five other schools in China, either as a visitor or as a founder. He was also an important writer who authored two books.

She was born around 1635 in Chenzhou 辰州, Hunan. His original name was Wei Yuandu 魏元都. His father, Wei Jian 魏建, became a *juren* 舉人 (holder of a provincial-level degree) in 1645 under the rump Ming regime. Wei Jian made sure that his son received a sound education, and by the age of eight Yuandu was able to recite a thousand words without forgetting, was practiced in the *Classic of Poetry*, had learned literary skills, and was able to compose many remarkable and excellent phrases (至八齡日誦千言輒記不忘習詩經學文藝殊多秀句; *JXCP*, p. 83).

During the period, a time of civil war and intensive military activity following the collapse of the Ming dynasty, the armies of the Qing General Ma Jiaolin 馬蛟麟 were in the region on "pacifying" (*pingding* 平定) assignments.⁸⁷ Ma Jiaolin, who was a Muslim, appointed She Yingju 舍應舉, also a Muslim, to be in charge of military affairs in the village of Chenzhou where the Wei family lived. Following his move to the village, She Yingju made his residence at the Wei family mansion. As a result, Wei Yuandu's life was

86. On She, see *JXCP*, pp. 79–93.

87. General Ma Jiaolin, a native of Tongxin (Ningxia) was one of many noted Chinese Muslim generals in the Qing armies. Zhao Can did not indicate what kind of "pacifying" assignment the general was carrying out. However, he did relate it to coming of the Qing dynasty (the wording is 我清繼承天運 "[when] our Qing inherited the heaven's fortune [or fate]"). Ma Jiaolin was the uncle of Ma Xiong 馬雄, who was involved in the Wu Sangui rebellion during the reign of the Kangxi emperor. Ma Xiong and his son, Ma Chengyin 馬承蔭, were the patrons of a number of Chinese Muslim scholars active during the 1680s.

transformed. That year his father died, leaving behind not only the young Wei Yuandu but his mother (surnamed Wu 吳) and his grandmother (surnamed Hu 胡). Wei Jian's female survivors reached an agreement with the She family. General She—who had no sons—would adopt the young boy, and the two women would join his household. Wei Yuandu was required to change his name to She.⁸⁸

Wei Yuandu changed not only his name but also his religion. The term used in the *Genealogy* to describe his conversion to Islam is *jin* 進, “to enter,” “to advance,” or “to make progress.” Wei experienced the conversion as an illuminating transformation. The day Master She “entered” Islam, says Zhao, “his heart suddenly became open and clear, as if he had acquired pure light; he was happy [as if] he had found joy in his life for several days” 先生次日進清真教自覺心地豁然如獲清光怡樂自得者數日 (*JXCP*, p. 83). As a result of this experience, She chose the style name Qiling 起靈 (“rising” or “uprising spirit”) (*JXCP*, p.84).

She's adoption and conversion were followed by a change in his course of studies. He was sent to study with a local Muslim teacher named Yang 楊. Apparently, this step was not taken with the aim of making the young convert into an Islamic scholar rather than an examination candidate, although this in fact was its outcome. Although She had converted to Islam because of his adoption, the desire to study Islam in a more scholarly fashion was his, not that of his adoptive parents.

She Yunshan returned to the She family home in Shaanxi after completing his studies but did not stay for long. There he married a woman named surnamed Lan 蘭 and fathered a son. After the death of his wife and his adoptive mother, he left his son with relatives and headed eastward. He was invited to teach in a number of local schools and established several more during his travels. By the time he was thirty, he was already a well-known teacher. He finally settled in Kaifeng, where he established a school, taking on

88. The agreement was worked out between Wei Jian's mother, Madame Wu, and She Yingju's wife, Madame Li 李. In all likelihood, the two surviving Wei women had no protection or sources of financial support and for that reason agreed to give the boy to the Shes and join the family themselves (*JXCP*, pp. 83–84).

over a hundred students, of whom fifty-three became teachers.⁸⁹ Two—Ma Jingxin 馬景新 and Li Shaorang 李紹讓—rose to prominence and were included in the *Genealogy* (*JXCP*, pp. 103–5). She was still alive at the time of the *Genealogy*'s compilation, and it is likely that he went on to have more disciples beyond those recorded in it. The Kaifeng school was strongly oriented toward Sufism, and most of its scholarly activity was concerned with the study and translation of Sufi texts into Chinese.

THE NANJING CENTER AND THE YUAN FAMILY

The fourth Islamic educational center, in Nanjing, was active even before the establishment of the center in Jining. Its first school was established by Feng Yangwu while he was teaching in the city during the first years of the seventeenth century. According to Zhao Can's account, these were the origins of the southernmost part of the educational network.

Nanjing's first native teacher was Ma Zhenwu, one of Feng's students.⁹⁰ Ma Zhenwu established a school in a large hall attached to the central mosque in Nanjing, the Zhengjue Mosque 爭覺寺,⁹¹ known as the Hanximen 漢西門 school.⁹² This was the beginning of the rise of Islamic education and scholarly activity in Nanjing. Zhao mentioned that the Hanximen school had been filled with pupils and disciples since its establishment by Ma Zhenwu (至今代不乏人實先生以啓之). At first, according to Zhao, Nanjing was not an important educational center and had a reputation as a place with a shallow and superficial level of Islamic learning (初南都吾教之各坊眾教范雖居家習經惟居學之名甘於淺陋而已).

Ma Zhenwu was himself a product of Nanjing's educational institutions, where he had begun his career as a student of the Con-

89. For a list of She's disciples, see *ibid.*, pp. 80–81.

90. For a list of Feng Yangwu's disciples, see *ibid.*, p. 38.

91. This mosque was built in 1388 during the early Ming by Muslims from Anatolia (Lumiguo 魯密國, i.e., "Rum," the Arab name for Byzantium). More halls and rooms were added in the fifteenth century. For a description of the mosque and a blueprint, see Liu Zhiping, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao jianzhu*, pp. 41–42.

92. For the chapter on Ma Zhenwu, see *JXCP*, pp. 50–51.

fucian classics. Dissatisfied with his town's Islamic educational offerings, he traveled to Feng Yangwu's school in Zhangjiawan, Hebei, and studied with Feng for several years. He first worked with Feng at the school in Zhangjiawan; later the two moved together to Nanjing. Zhao comments that Ma Zhenwu's studying with Feng Yangwu was an unusual case, for Ma Zhenwu was older than his teacher by eight years (at the time Ma began his studies, Feng was twenty-seven, and Ma thirty-five) (*JXCP*, p. 51). Ma Zhenwu studied hard, and even though he started at a late age, he managed to excel and "graduated" in six years. Having completed his studies, Ma Zhenwu began teaching at the Hanximen school, where he remained for twenty-five years. He had a number of disciples from Nanjing as well as from Shandong and Shaanxi. Of these, three are very important—Li Yanling and Chang Yunhua, cofounders of the school in Jining, Shandong; and Yuan Shengzhi of Nanjing.

The second Nanjing native to become a teacher was Ma Junshi 馬君實 (apparently no relation to Ma Zhenwu). Even though Ma Junshi was not Ma Zhenwu's disciple, the Zhenwu appointed Junshi his successor.⁹³ Ma Junshi first received a Confucian education, but only at a preliminary level (he obtained the semi-official title *mingjing* 明經) (*JXCP*, p. 52).⁹⁴ After being "capped" (becoming a literatus), he studied the Confucian classics but found the study too shallow (冠後方習經籍學業淺就而已). Thus he went on to study with the teacher Zhang Shaoshan of Lintong 臨潼, Ningxia, who taught in Nanjing and also in Xi'an in the northwest. Ma Junshi apparently had to leave Nanjing after a confrontation of some sort with Ma Zhenwu. After completing his studies in the northwest, Ma Junshi returned to Nanjing, took the place of Ma Zhenwu, and taught for many years. He had a large group of disciples in Nanjing, among them the author of the earliest surviving important

93. This probably occurred during the late 1630s, since Ma Junshi was of the same generation as Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling and was alive in 1680 when Ma Zhu visited the city.

94. The title *mingjing* occurs several times in the *Genealogy*.

Han Kitab text, Wang Daiyu.⁹⁵ Ma himself wrote a preface for one of the books written by this disciple.⁹⁶

The third teacher in Nanjing, Yuan Shengzhi (b. ca. 1620), was a disciple of Ma Zhenwu and Zhang Shaoshan. He was also a classmate of Li Yanling, Chang Yunhua, and Ma Junshi. Yuan was the son of the local imam, and established his own school in Nanjing in a mosque that came to be known as the Yuansi 袁寺 (the Yuan Mosque) (*JXCP*, pp. 66–67). Yuan was known for his lectures and had hundreds of students and a reputation for honesty and sincerity. Perhaps Zhao made much of the man's moral characteristics because he had nothing to say about his erudition. Of Yuan's eight disciples he was succeeded by two, his son Yuan Ruqi and his favorite disciple, Ma Jinyi 馬進益, who was known for his excellent knowledge of Arabic philology.⁹⁷ Ma came from a poor family and grew up in the Yuans' home, although he was not formally adopted. After Yuan's premature death, Ma Jinyi established his own school in Nanjing, but he was considered to be Yuan's successor. Zhao tells us that upon his deathbed Yuan declared: "Without Ma Jinyi I would not be able [to teach]" 非馬進益余不能也.

The family school founded by Yuan Shengzhi was taken over by his son, Yuan Ruqi (b. ca. 1640), who continued to teach. Like his father, Yuan Ruqi was known as a good orator and also as a poet. Apparently during his time the school became even bigger than it had been in his father's day. Zhao mentioned three more teachers by their surnames and titles only—Teacher Liu 劉師, Teacher Wu 伍師, and Teacher Chen 陳師—also active in the school at that time. Although the identities of Chen and Wu are unclear, regarding Liu's identity there is hardly any doubt. He most probably is Liu Sanjie, who was related to the Yuans and was Yuan's companion for many years. Liu translated and published portions of the Qur'an and wrote several "historical" accounts of

95. Wang's name appears on the list and next to it are the titles of the books he wrote; see *ibid.*

96. *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 313–14.

97. The term used by Zhao (*ibid.*, p. 97) for philology is *nabawu* 那哈吳, a transliteration of *nabuw* (Arabic for "Islamic philology").

Chinese Muslims. His son Liu Zhi, the author of several books on Islam, was Yuan Ruqi's student.

The Yuan family was involved in many educational and scholarly activities in Nanjing and became known in Chinese Islamic tradition as the "Nanjing Yuans." Yuan Ruqi's son, who may have become a teacher in the family school, is not mentioned in the *Genealogy*, probably because it was completed while he was still a student.⁹⁸ However, Yuan's grandson, Yuan Guozuo, played an important role in editing and publishing Liu Zhi's works during the 1770s. With the three teachers of Yuan Ruqi's generation, Zhao's *Genealogy* reaches the time of its own composition and thus its conclusion.

Analysis

The *Jingxue xi chaun pu* is a vital source of information about the Chinese Islamic scholarly network, but it is by no means comprehensive. Zhao included in his lists of each teacher's students only those who became teachers themselves or who were important in some other way—as writers or translators of texts, imams, or founders of mosques. Zhao also gave the names of the sons or sons-in-law of specific teachers and noted each person's relationship to the master (such as "married the teacher's first daughter," "the teacher's nephew"). Zhao ascribed "hundreds of students" to many teachers but said nothing further about them. Thus, the majority of students who attended Islamic schools within the system remain unknown.

Other evidence points to large numbers of students. For example, the school in Jining, which was the largest in China, could accommodate hundreds of students and was constructed with money collected from the many Chinese Muslim communities in the area.⁹⁹ The supporters of the school and their sons were most probably also the clients of the school. At another point in the *Genealogy*, when discussing the contribution of the four great

98. Yuan Ruqi received one of the four original copies of the completed genealogy (ibid., p. 100).

99. HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 50–51.

teachers, Ma Minglong, Ma Junshi, Chang Yunhua, and his close associate Li Yanling, Zhao says that they had “more than a thousand students” (*JXCP*, p. 58). Clearly, we know absolutely nothing about literally thousands of Muslims processed by the educational system.

Three categories of students are present in the *Genealogy*. The first consists of the thirty-one major teachers, who appear twice, once as students and once as teachers with their own schools. This group, headed by Hu Dengzhou, forms the backbone of the *Genealogy*. With the exception of Hu Dengzhou—who is the *taishi*, or grand teacher, of the rest—all are referred to as *xiansheng* 先生 (master teacher), even when they are listed as disciples of other teachers. For each we are given full accounts of their lives, education, and deeds.

The second group consists of 285 men who are listed as disciples and became teachers in a local mosque school but left nothing to be remembered by. The *Genealogy* refers to these men by the term *shi* 師 (teacher),¹⁰⁰ and in most cases provides only their name and place of birth. For a few of them, however, Zhao Can added a note regarding a special skill for which the person was known or regarding his kinship relation to the master.

The third group consists of the anonymous mass of students. About them little information is provided. They may have been children of Muslim gentry sent to an Islamic school for a while and then to an academy that trained them as examination candidates. The accounts of several of the teachers, such as Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling, suggest that this may have been the case with numerous boys who did not follow the path chosen by Chang and Li.

Three regions—northwestern China, northeastern China, and Jiangnan—were the main sources of students (see Table A1 in the Appendix). The Muslim communities of Yunnan and Guangdong contributed only ten students, little more than 3 percent of the total. For the most part, the Islamic educational network clearly served only the northern and central-eastern parts of China.

100. Almost 300 names are mentioned in the *Genealogy*. I tabulate only those who are listed as students.

We can only speculate as to the reasons behind the absence of the southern provinces from the *Genealogy*. There is no evidence for the existence of Islamic education in the Guangdong area, and this province was apparently disconnected from the Muslim communities in the north.

The case of the province of Yunnan in the southwest is different. Yunnan had long had a large Muslim population, one that went back for centuries to the area's incorporation into the Yuan khanate in the thirteenth century. The governors of Yunnan were for a long period Muslims—the descendants of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din, the Bokhari prince appointed by the Mongols as the region's first governor. Shams al-Din played a role in "civilizing" the province for the Yuan rulers, and his successors continued to do so for the Ming as well.¹⁰¹ Chinese Muslim tradition has it that these governors built and supported a school system, but there is no evidence for this in the late Ming.

Wang Jianping, a scholar of Yunnanese Muslims, has found a tombstone in the village of Xiaoweigeng, Menghua county, marking the grave of one Ma Ju (d. 1597). This individual spent some years in Shaanxi studying Islam and then returned to Yunnan, where he established a school.¹⁰² With this one exception, there is no evidence of an educational network in Yunnan until the nineteenth century, at which point one was established with the support of the state.¹⁰³ As we have seen above, there are several instances in the *Genealogy* in which a visit or a migration of a scholar to Yunnan is mentioned, but nothing is said about the consequences of that migration. Yunnan was too far to have close, intense links with the specific network discussed here.

Perhaps the best indication of the absence of any significant Islamic educational activity in the province was the career of Ma Zhu, the Yunnanese Islamic scholar who spent most of his years *outside* his native Yunnan. The French commandant Henri Marie

101. On Shams al-Din, see Armijo-Hussein, "Sayyid 'Ajall Shams al-Din."

102. Wang Jianping, *Concord and Conflict*, p. 150. (Zhao mentions a student named Ma from Menghua county, Yunnan, who could be the same man.) Wang does not provide characters for this man.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 150–51.

Gustave d'Ollone, who studied southwestern Muslims for three years (1906–9), noticed that the Muslim communities in the region were isolated from the rest of Muslims in the country as well as from one another.

The first feature that thrust itself on the travellers' notice after reaching Yünnan was the *isolation* of Yünnan Moslems. It was an isolation not only as regards the great centres of Islam; Yünnan Moslems have little to do with Moslems of other Chinese provinces; nay, it goes even further than that, it amounts to a congregationalism that isolates mosque from mosque. Further investigation modified the too rigid impressions; but merely modified them, they were not contradicted.¹⁰⁴

I assume that the situation during the first years of the twentieth century probably held throughout most of the imperial period. Isolation, then, seems a reasonable explanation as to why the remote Yunnanese Muslims are virtually ignored in the *Genealogy*.

In terms of the spread and growth of the educational network, it had a modest beginning in the northwest, but six or seven decades after the establishment of the first school it grew dramatically. The most obvious indicator of this is the precipitous rise in numbers of students toward the mid-seventeenth century. Up to that time, only thirty-nine students had graduated from Islamic schools and become teachers. Soon thereafter, however, the number rises to 215, a more than fivefold increase. The rise is most dramatic in the eastern regions. Although the number of students from the northwest rose from a total of twenty-two for all previous years combined to fifty-eight by the mid-seventeenth century, the number of north-eastern students rose from four to seventy-six, and the number of Jiangnan students from ten to seventy-four. (In fact, the number of northwestern students educated in the northwest had declined; about half of the fifty-eight had studied in the eastern schools in Kaifeng, Jining, and Nanjing.)

The Chinese Islamic educational network clearly increased in size and gravitated eastward as time passed. In this respect it was no different from the general societal trends in education. Benjamin Elman and Alexander Woodside argue for a general expan-

104. Warren, "D'Ollone's Investigations on Chinese Moslems," p. 2.

sion in education in Qing China. They also maintain, following Evelyn Raswki's study on literacy, that some growth occurred also in literacy (although this increase was much more limited in scope).¹⁰⁵ As for the geographical dimensions of Islamic education in China, it seems that these, too, were in keeping with general trends in Chinese society. Despite its relatively small Muslim population, Jiangnan stands out—with 104 students out of the total 285—as the largest center of Islamic education. Furthermore, Nanjing had by the mid- to late seventeenth century already produced twenty graduates as opposed to one in Jining in Shandong.¹⁰⁶ The Jiangnan region enjoyed a higher degree of urbanization and was “the hub of commerce and of communication in late imperial China.”¹⁰⁷ Elman has emphasized the connection between its economic and commercial prosperity, on one hand, and its cultural prosperity (both in terms of literacy and education), on the other. This connection was largely the result of literati-merchant cooperation in educational projects in the region. Similarly, the educated elite of Jiangnan played a key role in the cultural and intellectual changes occurring in China during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁰⁸

As shown by Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix, Chinese Muslim natives of Jiangnan were typical of elites in general. Nanjing was the largest center in terms of the numbers of students and of prominent teachers active in the city. Kaifeng and Jining, which were also large educational centers, seem to have had great numbers of students more because of the personalities of the teachers (Chang Yunhua in Jining and She Yunshan in Kaifeng) than because of the location. Virtually all the figures involved in the production of Chinese Islamic books came from the region.

105. Woodside and Elman, “The Expansion of Education in Ch’ing China,” in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, pp. 530–31.

106. This could also be due to the death of two great teachers from Jining. Chang Yunhua died in 1680, and Li Yanling shortly thereafter.

107. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 8.

108. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–13.



The statistical evidence provided by Zhao's *Genealogy* demonstrates the origins, growth patterns, and geographic dissemination of a Chinese Muslim network of education during the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth. Zhao's preoccupation with tracing the links—pedagogical, marital, blood, master-disciple—between different Chinese Muslim scholars provides us with the framework for a detailed family tree of Chinese Muslim pedagogy and scholarship. The data provided by Zhao can be corroborated, piecemeal, in other contemporary works and, for the most part, appear to be accurate. Zhao's *Genealogy* is a source of unparalleled importance for our understanding of the contours of the Chinese Muslim educational network—indeed, for positing its very existence.

Most significant, the data in the *Genealogy* trace the emergence of a broader clientele that was attached to, supportive of, and supported by Chinese Muslim learning. As Chinese Muslim scholars defined it, to be Chinese Muslim in late imperial China was to be connected, in one way or another, to this constituency. Thus Chinese Muslim identity was, like other Chinese identities, institutionally shaped. The education system was the arena in which Chinese Islamic “cultural capital” (to use Bourdieu's term) was negotiated.¹⁰⁹

Who Were the Constituents of the Network?

The existence of a Muslim educational network using Chinese as its main language of instruction raises questions regarding the social profile of its students and constituency. It is clear that the level of Chinese literacy among the members of the constituency was relatively high. The numerous texts in Chinese produced by Muslim scholars, as well as the *Genealogy* itself, attest to that literacy. In these writings, we find evidence and anecdotal material suggest-

109. See Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Randall Collins applies this term to the realm of intellectual networks, what he terms “intellectual space”; see Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, pp. 29–33.

ing the existence of many Muslim gentrified families with close ties to the network. As we shall see, some *Han Kitab* scholars held official degrees; other official degree holders were connected to the network. Simply put, there were people who “inhabited” both systems.

The Chinese Muslim educational network functioned alongside of, and to a degree parallel to, the Confucian education system. It is clear that the constituencies of the two were not wholly discrete. Just as there was ideological and philosophical overlap in the works studied and produced by the two constituencies, so, too, was there physical interaction among the constituencies’ members. The Chinese Muslim intellectual community was fundamentally an urban one, and its members were in constant contact with the mainstream Chinese intellectual trends of the period.

A source outside the *Genealogy* that suggests the extent to which Chinese Muslims participated in the Confucian education system is the list of letters of greetings sent to Ma Zhu upon the publication of his *Qingzhen zhinan* in 1681. Of the twenty-two authors of these greetings, several were listed in Zhao’s *Genealogy* as teachers or as students; several signed their letter using a title from the examination system, for example, *mingjing*. As a title, *mingjing* meant different things at different times in Chinese history. During the Qing, it was an unofficial way to designate a group of students in the National University 太學 who had the status of tribute students, *gongsheng* 貢生.¹¹⁰ *Gongsheng* were admitted as nominees to local Confucian schools but had to pass the metropolitan level of examinations to qualify for an official post. This suggests that perhaps several members of the Islamic educational system received, at least at some point, a formal Confucian education.

The *Genealogy* notes that many of the teachers began their studies in a Confucian school, gained a preliminary title, and then turned to Islamic studies. An example is Wu Zunqi 伍遵契 (who appears sometimes under his style name *Zixian* 子先; 1612–80) of Jiangning 江寧 (Nanjing). Wu was a *xiuca* (a low-level degree holder), originally from Suzhou, and is listed as a disciple of Ma

110. See Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*.

Jinyi from Nanjing. Wu translated an important Sufi text from Persian into Chinese. We know from the preface he wrote for the book that he began work on the translation with his older brother, Wu Yunyi 伍允翼, who is also listed as a student of Ma Jinyi sometime after the Ming-Qing transition.

Wu Zunqie probably lost his chance to become an official after the dynastic change and only then turned to Islamic scholarship. Conceivably, an Islamic education was his second option for a scholarly career. A descendant of Wu's, the modern Chinese Muslim historian and scholar Wu Yiye 伍貽業, discussed the history of his family in a short essay on the relationship between Islam and Confucianism. The essay, intended as a response to Samuel Huntington's theory of "clashing civilizations," describes the Wu family's arrival in China from Samarkand in the fourteenth century to serve as astronomers in the Ming court. The family settled in Nanjing and, during the late Ming period, produced its first recorded degree holder, Wu Zunqie. Throughout the Qing period, the family produced several other degree holders and high office holders in the Qing state apparatus.¹¹¹

What is important is that the members of the Wu lineage retained their status as a gentry family as well as their Muslim "identity" (whatever that may have consisted of) over a period of six centuries. One factor in maintaining their Muslim identity was the educational network, to which they were linked in one way or another throughout much of the Qing. Wu Zunqie was an examination candidate and a low degree holder, but at the same time both he and his brother were listed as students in Zhao's *Genealogy*. They functioned within, and defined themselves by, two parallel intellectual networks, one linked to the examination system and the other to the scholarly study of Islam. I suspect that this was also true of individuals who were not formally linked to either the Muslim or the Confucian educational networks.

The case of the Wus from Nanjing was representative of many other men listed in the genealogy. Furthermore, the high levels of literacy and the command of written Chinese demonstrated by and

attributed to many members of the Islamic educational system, as well as the many references and allusions to Confucian texts (although usually not by specific title), strongly suggest that large numbers of these men came from a literati background and were connected in way or another to the Confucian education system. Again, it was a rather unusual move to decide to become an Islamic scholar rather than an examination candidate. Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling had to ask their parents' permission to do so, as did She Yunshan. Chang Yunhua's account in the *Genealogy* tells of two officials, Ma Niulu 馬牛綠 and Ba Daizi 巴帶子, who sent their children to his school for "several years" (*JXCP*, p. 63). Since the language of instruction was Chinese, it is reasonable to assume that Muslim gentry or Muslim merchant families chose to send their sons for an Islamic education at least at the elementary level. A Muslim boy could learn his first Chinese characters in the Islamic school and then move on to an academy.

Data from genealogies of Muslim families in China's eastern regions provide some keys as to the network's constituency. Here we find several lineages that, through participation in the examination system, produced a relatively high number of literate persons as well degree holders, as was the case with the Wus. Not until several generations after arriving in eastern China, particularly Jiangnan, did Muslim families typically produce their first degree holder. In all cases, these families identified themselves as "Muslim" over a long stretch of time and did not cease to do so after their integration into the examination system.

An example is the Jin family of Nanjing. The family's ancestors came from Mecca (Mojia 默伽) during the Mongol period and settled in Yongping 永平 (in modern Hebei). After the Yuan-Ming transition, the family, which until then used its original Arabic name, was given a Chinese surname, Jin 金, by the founder of the Ming dynasty. This was most probably a reward for service, apparently military, rendered the Ming cause. During the Yongle 永樂 period (1403-24) the family, still in the service of the Ming court, moved to Nanjing. In Nanjing, about three or four generations later, Jin Xian 金賢, a *jinshi* of 1502, was in charge of several military and administrative offices.

This Jin Xian, so his biography tells us, was a man learned in the Confucian tradition who from a very early age studied the *Book of Changes* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. He also wrote a commentary on the *Annals*, the *Chunqiu jiyu* 春秋紀愚 (A simplified version of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*).¹¹² His son, Jin Dache 金大車, was also known for his literary accomplishments, and in 1525 he successfully passed the provincial-level examinations and received a *juren* degree. In addition to participation in mainstream literati culture, the Jin family fully identified itself as “Muslim” and still remembers its Arabian origins today.

Nakada Yoshinobu examined two genealogies of Muslim lineages from Jiangnan: the *Mishi zongpu* 米氏宗譜 (Genealogy of the Mi family), and the *Piling Shashi chongji zupu* 毘陵沙氏重輯族譜 (Genealogy of the Sha family of Piling, recompiled), found in the Tōyō bunko. His examination of these documents shows that patterns of marriage and adoption among Muslims changed in central and eastern China during the Ming period. Comparing his findings with a study of Muslims in the northwest, he found sharp differences between the two regions. Nakada argues that, unlike their northwestern counterparts, Muslims from eastern China failed to maintain Islamic traditions and were heavily “influenced” by Chinese customs—the result of high levels of intermarriage with non-Muslims. Nevertheless, writes Nakada, eastern Muslims did keep their *identity* as Muslims despite what he views as the “corruption” of their Islam.¹¹³

Recent studies of genealogies of Muslim lineages from Jiangnan corroborate Nakada’s early findings. These studies show that during the early Ming, from about the fifth generation on, there was an increasing participation in official institutions, particularly the examination system. There was also a high degree of literacy (in terms of Chinese language) among Chinese Muslim scholars of the period, and a certain number of Chinese Muslim students were educated both in the Chinese Muslim educational network and in schools directed toward the civil examinations.

112. For the biography of Jin Xian and his two sons, based on Ming sources, see HRZ (*Mingdai*), pp. 139–46.

113. Nakada, “Chūgoku Musurimu to sōzoku soshiki.”

Most illuminating in this regard are studies of the Ma 馬 family genealogy found in 1968 by Luo Xianglin in Columbia University's library.¹¹⁴ The origins of this Chinese Muslim family begin with one Ma Yize 馬依澤, who arrived in China to serve as a court astronomer in the second year of the Jianlong 建隆 era (961) of Song Taizu 宋太祖. The genealogy states that he came from Lumu 魯穆 (Rum; i.e., Anatolia)¹¹⁵ and ended up settling in present-day Anhui. The first degree holder in the family appeared in the third "Chinese" generation. Ma Wencheng 馬文成, Ma Yize's grandson, passed the provincial examination in 1000 and received the degree of *juren*. The fourth generation of the family had three *jinshi* degree holders, one *juren*, and one official (a prefect) without an examination degree. Up to the late nineteenth century, the thirty-one generations of this family produced forty-four degree holders and over ninety officials in the Chinese military and the state apparatus.

Ma Zhaozeng's examination of this same lineage from the early Ming until the late nineteenth century found that from about the third generation in China on, the numbers of *juren* and *jinshi* degree holders in the lineage increased. He finds a total of thirty-two degree holders in a period of 450 years. In addition, he shows that there were fifteen military degree holders in the family during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹¹⁶ In the twentieth century, a descendant of this family, Ma Yiyu 馬以愚 (1900–1961), became an important historian of Chinese Islam and a Chinese Muslim activist.¹¹⁷

Over the course of a millennium-long period of lineage development, such families consistently identified themselves as Muslim, although the practical, enacted aspects of that identification changed over time. Thus, the Mas started as Muslim courtiers and ended some thousand years later as Chinese Muslim nationalists. In between, the family produced generations of officials in the state apparatus.

114. *Huaining Ma shi zongpu*.

115. As noted above, Rum was the Arabic name for Byzantium, which suggests that the family originates from Anatolia.

116. *Huaining Ma shi zongpu*, vols. 2–13. See also Ma Zhaozeng, "Huaining Ma shi zongpu ji lidai zhuyao renwu kao."

117. See Ma Yiyu's biography in *Zhongguo Yisilan baike quanshu*, pp. 350–51.

Such families were self-conscious in identifying themselves simultaneously as both “Hui” (i.e., Muslim) and “Ru”—Confucian. The authors of the Guo family genealogy, to mention another instance, state that “we are families who are Hui, and at the same time we are Ru” (*hui er jian ru* 回而兼儒).¹¹⁸ As historians, we are forced to take such claims seriously. For although we may labor to historicize these terms and find it awkward at times to understand their content independent of each other, let alone in tandem, the fact remains that urban gentry Muslim families of east China had no problem doing so. Moreover, their awareness that as Chinese speakers they no longer had access to the original scriptural sources of Islam did not inhibit their ability to understand themselves as fully Muslim. What it meant, instead, was that they developed alternative means of interpreting their Muslimness. The phrase “Hui as well as Ru” also implies, quite powerfully to my mind, that being “Chinese” and Muslim was not seen as warranting an explanation. But being Muslim and *Ru* did require an explanation or justification—perhaps because Muslim gentry families came to understand “Islam,” their Islam, as a category with the same status as Confucianism.

In the case of the group of scholars with whom this book is concerned, this alternative means consisted primarily of association with the educational network. The data on which my study is based show this to be the case, for the moment that teachers from the west moved to the east, there was a sudden boom in the numbers of participants in the scholarly network. With the arrival of these teachers, the many Muslims already living in the urban areas of the east suddenly found that they had a new, and scholarly, means of giving content to their Muslim identity.

This also explains why the development of the network, and the *Han Kitab* itself, took place in the east. The gentry setting of the east provided what was lacking in the west: a readymade, highly educated Muslim constituency that had kept its Muslim identity

118. Cited in Bai, “Ji zhong Huihui jiapu zhong suo fanying de lishi wenti,” p. 173. Writing in 1957, Bai did not hesitate to regard such statements as signs of “feudal consciousness” on the part of Muslim gentry families.

but needed a new content for it. This content was to be produced in the forms of Chinese texts, written and taught in a framework that valued scholarship and learning.

The genealogy of the Guo 郭 family records the text of a stele from 1609 that speaks of the relationship of the family to the Arabic and Persian scriptural heritage of Islam: "The classics of Islam are not in Chinese, and [knowledge of Arabic] is not common in the [current] generation." Because of difficulties in understanding the scriptures, "the people can be made to follow [Islam] but cannot be made to know it" 民可使由不可使知.¹¹⁹ The Ding 丁 family genealogy, in a section titled "Explanation of Ancestral Teaching" ("Zu-jiaoshuo" 祖教說) dated 1536, refers to Arabic and Persian as "foreign sounds" *yiyin* 夷音 that "we do not understand" 不解文義; yet it nevertheless consistently identifies the family as Muslim.¹²⁰

In a discussion of Hui lineages along China's southern coast, Gladney maintains that for these Hui "Islamic purity is not nearly as critical as the truth of foreign ancestry to their ethnic identity and understanding of *qing zhen*." He cites what he calls a "typical response to the question about Hui ancestry": "My ancestor was an Arab, and our name was changed to Jin in the Ming dynasty. We have our family genealogy to prove it. . . . We are Hui because we are descended from these foreign ancestors."¹²¹ Indeed, the statement "our family's origins lie in the Western Lands" is the opening line in virtually all the genealogies mentioned here.

Hei Jingyuan 黑景源 of Linqing 臨清, Shandong, the late Ming author of the introduction to the Hei 黑 lineage genealogy, furnishes an earlier instance of the thinking identified by Gladney: "Our family originates from the Western Regions. . . . We first came to Linqing, and then other families gathered there: the Cuis, the Chens, the Zhaos and others, a total of eighteen families, all from the Western Regions" 吾祖原系西域 . . . 遂聚崔氏陳氏趙氏

119. Cited in *ibid*.

120. The Ding family published a comprehensive genealogy and family history, including the writing of its major figures (most of them scholar-officials); see *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, p. 29. See also Terada, "Mindai Quanzhou Huizu zakao."

121. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, p. 262.

等一十八姓各於西域。¹²² Genealogical memory, then, not only established the “Muslimness” of the lineage but also reinforced and maintained its diasporicity. Diasporicity—in the sense of memory of foreign ancestry—and Muslimness went hand in hand and had in fact almost the same meaning.

The Heis, Jins, Mas, Guos, and Dings, as Gladney shows in his formulation of lineage identity, are the very families that gave rise to figures for whom the “core of identity is stripped bare in [the contemporary Muslim] emphasis upon the truth (*zhen* 真) of their genealogy. Their purity as Hui resides in the truth of this ancestry, rooted in the idea of descent from foreign ancestors who came from the West.”¹²³ Gladney is correct in his identification of genealogy as the key component in the transmission of Muslim identity over long periods of time. What my research suggests, however, is that Muslimness was not so much “stripped bare” of all other components as it was shaped so as to attach itself to different social structures at different historical moments. In the late Ming and early Qing, the structure that most meaningfully provided content to Muslim identity for urban Muslim gentry was the educational constituency and its scholarly values. Similarly, in the modern period, the emergence of national categories has provided the social structure from which Muslim content was derived. Far earlier, direct connection with Arabic and Persian scriptural sources had likely shaped its content. In all cases, though, Muslimness depended heavily on genealogy. In changing historical contexts, the Chinese Muslim identity thus emerges not as a gradual, progressive whittling away of content, until only genealogy was left as a meaningful marker, but as a form of identity that, like many other Chinese identities, was strongly driven by genealogy and collective memory. At the same time, it was flexible enough to derive its meaningful content from different social structures at different historical moments.

Finally, remembering one’s Islamic origins meant also remembering one’s family’s foreign origins. For some, remembering these origins was a conscious act. Wang Daiyu, a *Han Kitab* author from

122. Hei, “Linqing Heishi jiapu xu.”

123. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, p. 291

the late Ming period, put it candidly in the introduction he wrote to one of his books during the 1640s. Having stated that his family came to Nanjing from Arabia (Tianfang) during Ming Taizu's time, he went on to say: "Even though my family has been habituated [cooked] here [in China] for 300 years, [we still] recall our source and trace back our roots; [these roots] are not something [we] dare to forget" 三百年來雖於此習熟之久然而溯本追原不敢有忘也。¹²⁴ Genealogy, like the *Genealogy*, helped these Muslims remember who they had been, but, and this is more critical, it helped them shape who they were in changing historical moments.

124. Wang Daiyu, "Zixu" 自敘 (Author's introduction), in ZQX, p. 16.

TWO

Self-Perception and Identity Among the Scholarly Constituency

The *Jingxue xi chuan pu* provides the detail and breadth necessary to posit the existence of a widespread Chinese Muslim educational network, to chart its growth, to map its geographic spread, and to get some idea of the huge numbers of people associated with it in one way or another—its constituency. In addition to the detailed statistical and prosopographical information that can be extracted from the *Genealogy*, Zhao's text provides abundant anecdotal material, which in a different way is of great value in sketching the contours of the Chinese Muslim scholarly community and understanding its core values, self-perception, and relationship to its larger cultural context.

This material consists not of basic factual information (name, place of birth, kinship relations, scholarly affiliations, and so forth) but of an abundance of informal stories regarding the character and personality, erudition, style of teaching, and even adventures of central figures in the Chinese Muslim educational network. As other scholars have noted, anecdotal material played an important role in canon formation in the late Ming and early Qing.¹ In the Chinese Muslim case, such information depicts the ways in which scholarly identity was shaped and propagated by the educational network and reflects the network's cultural values.

1. See, e.g., Pauline Yu, "Canon Formation in Late Imperial China," p. 96.

I approach both the “factual” and the “informal” categories of information as evidence. In other words, while accepting the first as generally correct in a factual sense, I do not discard the second as a mere rhetoric. Our inability to corroborate Zhao Can’s claims regarding the number of students a given teacher might have had does not mean that we should dismiss his anecdotes (which, by nature, are less easily “provable” in any empirical sense of the term). The problem with anecdotal evidence is not that it is useless but that it is rarely put to good use, if to any use at all.

The narrative material provided by Zhao Can is an important source for understanding how various individuals were remembered by their contemporaries. Such material provides the means for learning how they understood the role of various individuals in the creation of their greater social group. Michael Chamberlain, whose work on the intellectual community of medieval Damascus (1190–1350) relies extensively on biographical dictionaries, has addressed this same evidentiary question in his own work: “Anecdotes such as those found in chronicles and biographical dictionaries also had social uses that can be interpreted. . . . Whether these anecdotes were true or false is in some respects less important than that to those who told them and listened to them they made sense. It is their plausibility—how these memorialized accounts of individual lives fit into a social logic that our sources and their subjects shared—that we need to understand.”²

Chamberlain’s point is apropos here.³ The stories and the anecdotes that make up a significant portion of the *Genealogy* convey

2. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*, p. 19.

3. Carlo Ginzburg has also taken up the question of the validity of using anecdotal information as a historical source. In his analysis of Natalie Zemon Davis’s *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Ginzburg demonstrates that it is precisely through the use of conjectural and factually unverifiable detail that Zemon Davis is able so potently to present us with conclusions that are “almost obvious.” As Ginzburg explains, “Davis’ research . . . does not hinge on the opposition of ‘true’ and ‘invented’ but upon integration . . . of ‘realities’ and ‘possibilities.’” As a result, Zemon Davis of necessity has recourse to such terms as “perhaps,” or “one can presume.” But, for Ginzburg, such terminology does not weaken Davis’s work. Instead, it leads to a “deepening of the investigation” (specific and general) and the carving out of a “realm of historically determined possibility”; see Ginzburg, “Proofs and Possibilities,” pp. 116–17.

the values of the Chinese Muslim intellectual community and were directed toward Zhao's goals for his work: "To teach and exhort the younger generations of the numerous followers of our Dao, to accompany and teach them, so [they will be able to] well restrain their many desires and complete their ability to affirm the Dao of the True and One; then they will all lessen their desires and possess their perfection!" (*JXCP*, p. 5).

The central and repeated message of these stories is that communal learning and scholarship are values of inestimable importance. The pursuit of excellence in scholarship, the emphasis on preserving and developing knowledge, the cultivation of learning skills, devotion to teachers, and reverence for specific texts were all essential components in the inculcation and propagation of this value among other scholars. For Chinese Muslim scholars, Islam—what they called "the Dao of Muhammad"—was learning itself. In addition to a strictly "factual" depiction of the history of Chinese Muslim scholarship, Zhao's *Genealogy* attempts to capture the Chinese Muslim past as that past fit into Zhao's vision of his community's own "realm of historically determined possibility," to borrow a term from Carlo Ginzburg.⁴

This chapter, then, is concerned with the "social logic" (Chamberlain's phrase) of the Chinese Muslim literati community, as that logic can be read through Zhao Can's *Genealogy* and its anecdotal content. It looks at the Muslim past as Chinese Muslim scholars, through their vision of "historically determined possibility," understood it and shows how these scholars, through that vision, hammered out their unique identity.

The Significance of the Starting Point

Books were the foundation on which Chinese Muslim learning and education rested, and a number of the vignettes included in the *Genealogy* give them a central position that accords with their centrality in the social world of the Chinese Muslim community. The Muslim educational network employed a collection of books, which expanded as more and more titles were added over the years.

4. Ginzburg, "Proofs and Possibilities," p. 116.

Zhao referred to these works, by title (in transliterated form), throughout his *Genealogy*. The mosque-schools that undergirded the system physically also functioned as libraries where these texts were kept.

What little bibliographic work has been done on these libraries suggests a high degree of conformity in the holdings of different libraries across time and place. In 1977 the scholar M. J. Shari'at visited the Dongsi 東四 Mosque in Beijing and examined the Arabic and Persian holdings of its library. He published his findings as an annotated bibliography in 1980.⁵ At roughly the same time, Donald Leslie and Mohamed Wassel were at work on a 1710 bibliography of Arabic and Persian texts, which gives the titles of these texts in Chinese transliteration and translation.⁶ The overlap between the two lists is considerable. A significant number of the books mentioned by Zhao Can also can be found on Shariat's and/or Leslie and Wassel's lists.

Thematically speaking, the core curriculum of the Chinese Muslim educational network bears a general resemblance to that of *madrasas* (schools or religious colleges) elsewhere in the contemporary Islamic world. Study (and books) centered around jurisprudence, philology, *hadith*, and the Qur'an and Qur'anic commentaries.⁷ The Chinese system, however, differed in three key regards from its counterparts elsewhere. First, in the mid-sixteenth century, as the network was forming, few books were available to teachers and students, a fact no doubt attributable to China's distance from the centers of education of the Islamic world. Second, in addition to books in Arabic and Persian, Chinese Muslims made use of books written in Chinese (both Islamic and non-Islamic, including the Chinese classics and official histories). This trend grew more pronounced with time, as Islamic learning became an indigenous Chinese social category, at least in the minds of Chinese Muslim literati. Finally, the students in the Chinese system, as opposed to

5. Shari'at, "The Library of the Tung-his [*sic*] Mosque at Peking."

6. Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih [Liu Zhi]."

7. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*. See also Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui, *Yisilanjiao yu Zhongguo wenhua*, pp. 368-87. *Hadith* refers to stories regarding deeds and decrees of the prophet Muhammad.

the western Islamic *madrasa* system, were not native speakers of either Arabic or Persian, the core Islamic languages. Therefore, special attention was given to their study, and linguistic erudition—in the west a matter of theological importance, particularly in the case of Arabic, the language of the Qur'an and thus of the divine himself—was a practical necessity rather than a recondite and philosophically laden pursuit.

One of the themes that runs throughout the *Genealogy* is the importance of linguistic study and translation. As we shall see, the ideal scholar could translate knowledge effectively to his students, and translators of Islamic texts were held in the same high regard as the authors of original Chinese Islamic texts. Translation was perceived to be a matter not of linguistic transposition but of epistemological transmission. The universally acknowledged founder of Chinese Islamic learning, Hu Taishi was, first and foremost, a translator. The Chinese Muslim literati community did not, however, esteem him simply for his linguistic skills, brilliant as they doubtless were. More critically, Chinese Muslim intellectual tradition reveres him as the first great disseminator of knowledge. The high regard in which Hu is held by Chinese Muslim tradition corresponds directly to the huge emphasis placed on translation as the cornerstone of Chinese Muslim knowledge, education, and culture. This attitude toward translation is perhaps best understood through the role of textual knowledge in Chinese Muslim education.

Although a full textual reconstruction of the Chinese Muslim educational curriculum is impossible, Zhao's text opens a window into the seventeenth-century classroom of the Chinese Muslim school.⁸ There appear to have been no fully standardized curricula or set syllabi. Evidently, the curriculum was determined largely by

8. Such a reading has problems, too, since Zhao mentioned all names and concepts in Arabic and Persian in a transliterated form with Chinese characters. In order to identify the original name and title in Arabic and Persian, I use Pang Shiqian's list of books (fourteen titles; eight in Arabic, and six in Persian) taught in the nineteenth century in Chinese Muslim schools. This list identifies the originals behind the transliterated characters and is very helpful in identifying some of the titles found in Zhao's text (see Pang, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu"). Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui provide a similar but more elaborate list in *Yisilanjiao yu Zhongguo wenhua*, pp. 346–68.

the teacher's predilections, his appreciation of or fondness for a certain book, and, perhaps most important, the availability of texts.⁹ As we have seen, however, many teachers had studied together or otherwise come in contact, and there was thus likely overlap between the texts used by different teachers. Certain books would have been ubiquitous.¹⁰ Specific titles are invariably presented in terms of their connection to a certain teacher, and in some cases—especially in those of important or popular books—anecdotal material is provided about them as well.

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, we find evidence of a richer and more established curriculum, a development largely due to the activities of Chang Yunhua, whose school in Jining introduced a different method of teaching and a new curriculum. Chang had a broad and profound knowledge in a variety of fields, and this personal characteristic shaped Chinese Muslim learning as a whole (*JXCP*, pp. 59–63).¹¹ The improvement in the curriculum was also a result of the increase in available translations of Islamic classics, both Persian and Arabic.

9. This was, as Michael Chamberlain argues in *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus* (pp. 82–84), also the case in the Muslim world for a long period.

10. Just as Zhao gave no indication of a set syllabus, he made no mention of an examination that the students had to pass. It is not clear how it was decided, or how it was formally marked, that a student had successfully completed his studies. Whether this is a function of the Chinese Muslim intellectual establishment's status vis-à-vis the state is not certain. It is possible that it was imitative of the *madrasa* system, for this was the case also in the Muslim world: there were no fixed examinations, but a formal certificate was granted on the completion of study. Zhao speaks as if there was some set method of determining the moment one had completed his studies. Apparently certification and qualification were a question of general consensus and the teacher's appraisal of each student's accomplishments. There is no mention, however, of something that might be considered to be the equivalent of the *ijāza* (license) given to *madrasa* graduates in the Muslim world or to the examination degrees earned by successful candidates in the Confucian educational system.

11. This is also reflected in Pang, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu," pp. 1026–27, which refers to Jining as the Shandong "faction" (*Shandong pai* 山東派) as opposed to the Shaanxi faction. So does Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, p. 1359. Zhao's account of the books used (and later also books produced) in Jining reveals a stronger emphasis placed on Sufi texts (most in Persian) than on jurisprudence.

The central textual languages were Arabic and Persian, but the language of instruction was Chinese. There was a pressing need for both language instruction (in all three languages) and translations into Chinese. It is likely that during the early Qing (1640s–80s), and largely through the efforts of Chang Yunhua, students began systematic language study. This finds corroboration in the fact that the vast majority of translations of Islamic classics into Chinese were undertaken after the middle of the century. Chang himself wrote a Persian grammar, the *Fa'erxi wenfa* 法爾西文法 (A grammar of Farsi),¹² and a Persian-Arabic-Chinese lexicon, the *Huijing zihui* 回經字彙 (Lexicon of Islamic classics) (*JXCP*, p. 58).¹³ He composed an Arabic-Chinese and a Persian-Chinese dictionary, both of which were copied and used in all schools of the network (*JXCP*, p. 60). Language, first an important feature of the curriculum because it gave students the ability to read Islamic classics in the original, later became important as a means of teaching translators.¹⁴

Translation was both an act of scholarship and a means of cultural transmission and transposition. At first, to have access to Persian and Arabic meant to have access to Islamic knowledge. Translation, however, significantly changed the intellectual landscape. Whereas study of Arabic and Persian brought individual Chinese Muslims closer to Islamic knowledge, translation brought Islamic knowledge into China and created a new, Chinese Muslim body of knowledge, which, to the minds of scholarly Chinese Muslims, was understood as one important branch of Chinese learning among many others. It came to be understood as the “Dao of Muhammad.”

12. The book's Persian title was *Hava-i-minhaj* (Chinese transliteration 海瓦衣米諾哈志); see Leslie, *Islamic Literature*, p. 25; see also Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui, *Yisilanjiao yu Zhongguo wenhua*, pp. 361–62.

13. See also Yang Huaizhong and Yu Zhengui, *Yisilanjiao yu Zhongguo wenhua*, pp. 361–62.

14. Other important topics in the curriculum were philology (*nabuw*, which in the genealogy appears as 那哈吳); jurisprudence (*fiqh*, which in the genealogy appears as *fei ge* 蜚格); study of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, together with several of their commentaries; rhetoric (*butub* 虎托布); and literature (particularly Persian and Arabic poetry).

It is against this backdrop that Hu Taishi is styled the father of Chinese Muslim learning. Hu, the great teacher, the founder of the educational system, and, most important, the originator of the Chinese Muslim lineage of learning, is praised in the *Genealogy's* many prefaces as a model of the learned and accomplished Chinese Muslim man. His key importance rests on the fact that he was a "translator" in all senses of the term. He was the translator, of course, of specific Islamic classical works; he was also the translator of Islam itself (as an entire cultural category) into Chinese culture. Translation was the bridge by which Islam was tied to China, the very means by which Chinese Muslim scholars could claim Islam as their own and as Chinese. Thus Hu Taishi is described as the father of Chinese Islamic learning, the key individual who set it on the course it was to take for the next two centuries.

This collective cultural memory of Islam's transmission into China is not at odds with other, historical narratives of Islam's transmission into China, depictions that describe in detail early Muslims in China, their role in the acculturation process, and their gradual integration into Chinese society. Zhao was not interested specifically in accounting for the presence of Muslims in China; rather, his intent was to document the rise of Chinese Islamic knowledge. Hu Taishi is thus seen as the founder not of Islam in China but of Chinese Islamic knowledge and its tradition. It is in the context of this particular history that translation and translators play so pivotal a role.

In one preface, She Yunshan, Zhao's teacher, praised Hu as "a complete [perfect] man, a gift descended from heaven 賜降完人, [sent] to teach the people and the followers of the true." Hu's crucial role, wrote She, was as a translator and adaptor of the Islamic classics so that they could be used and studied in China. "With regard to our teaching, from the times of the Tang to those of the Ming, even though the [Islamic] classics [holy books] were transmitted into 傳入 this land 茲土 [i.e., China], it was difficult for people to understand their principle 理 and their meaning 義 . . . until Hu Taishi came and translated the texts into Chinese 欲譯國語 and established the first school."¹⁵ This description encapsu-

15. She Yunshan, "Xu," in *JXCP*, p. 1.

lates all the key attributes sought in an educated and esteemed Chinese Muslim literatus: he is a translator of books and an interpreter of their “principle” and their “meaning” (and hence a teacher); he is the founder of Chinese Muslim education. His actions are to be emulated by others, who in turn are to establish schools for the dissemination of knowledge.

Most important is She’s observation that Islamic knowledge was already available in China in Hu’s day. Again, Hu is important not for having introduced Islam to China—indeed, no mention is made of its origins. Hu’s centrality depends on his role as the originator of Muslim knowledge in Chinese or, better yet from the perspective of his disciples a century later, of Chinese Muslim knowledge. This observation must be understood from the vantage point of its author. The preface was composed in 1697, twenty years after Zhao first embarked upon the composition of the *Genealogy*, at the apogee of the Chinese Muslim educational system. The *Genealogy*, a text concerned with documenting the rise of Chinese Islamic knowledge, begins with Hu Taishi, the founder of Chinese Islamic knowledge as a Chinese cultural category. The importance of Hu in this regard is underscored by She’s suggestion that Hu’s origins are in fact divine or, to be more accurate, almost resembling those of the Prophet Muhammad himself: Hu is heaven-sent; he is “complete” and a heavenly “gift.” There is an ample literature documenting the tendency of new intellectual and religious movements to grant divine or semi-divine origins to their founders.¹⁶ In this regard, Hu is critical not simply as one link in a fundamentally Islamic form of knowledge but as the founding figure in a specifically Chinese form of Islamic knowledge. Through translation, as through Hu himself, Islam realizes its “Chinese potential” in more than the purely linguistic sense. In other words, it becomes a “learning,” *xue* 學, the way Chinese literati understand (and respect) it. The stone stele erected on Hu’s tomb in 1710 puts it simply: it is because of Hu that “our learning then became widely known in China” 而吾學遂乃盛傳於中國. “Before him,” says the tombstone echoing Zhao

16. See, among others, Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion*; and Doniger, *Other Peoples’ Myths*.

Can's own words about the great teacher, "books were scarce, scholars were few and far between" 經文匱乏學人寥落.¹⁷

In one of his own prefaces to the *Genealogy*, Zhao hailed Hu Taishi as "the man who held the greatest merit among the people of our Dao!" 有功於吾道之人普矣大矣 and the first in the chain of subsequent generations of disciples.¹⁸ Zhao's specification that Hu was the greatest among "Chinese Muslims" indicates, again, that Hu's great merit lies in having founded the specifically *Chinese* Islamic lineage of learning and its system of education. And, once again, the reference to learned "Chinese Muslims" and their "generations" as social categories must be read from the standpoint of the late seventeenth century. Although in Hu's own day (again, he died around 1597), one could scarcely speak in such terms, a century later, when Zhao was writing, such categories had emerged with clarity. By the time the network was at its peak, Hu was revered as its "ancestor." His image was a crucial element of the identity of Chinese Muslim scholars. For them, he was both a human "beginning," and a mythical "origin," to use Said's distinction.¹⁹

I have suggested that Zhao's *Genealogy of Transmission and Lineage of Classical Learning* encapsulates the three elements I have posited as constitutive of a system or network of education. It includes detailed accounts of the relationships—both kin and pedagogical—that link a large line of teachers and disciples; it discusses at length the corpus of literature used by these teachers; and it demonstrates that the community understands itself as well established within a broader literary society. The *Genealogy* should also be taken as evidence of the self-consciousness with which Chinese Muslims were able to envision and analyze themselves as a social category, one with its own discrete origins and semi-divine founder. The text's preoccupation is not the origins of Islam in China (and nor, for that matter, is mine). What mattered to Zhao, and to his countless (and often nameless) colleagues, was not that there

17. "Xiujian Hu Taishizu jiacheng ji," *HRZ (Mingdai)*, p. 405. This similarity suggests that Zhao himself took the words from an earlier stele on the tomb.

18. Zhao Can, "Jingxue xi chuan zongpu xu," in *JXCP*, p. 5.

19. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*.

were Muslims in China, but that there was a form of local knowledge that was simultaneously Muslim and Chinese. Translation—cultural, linguistic, and religious—was the means through which that distinctive simultaneity was effected.

To be a Chinese Muslim scholar did not mean that one was a Chinese capable of studying Islam (that is, versed in Arabic and Persian). Although the study of language brought individual Chinese Muslims closer to Islamic knowledge, translation brought Islamic knowledge into China and created a new, *Chinese Muslim*, body of knowledge. The task of the Chinese Muslim scholar was to propagate and expand this knowledge. Any community of knowledge based merely on foreign texts, written in a foreign tongue, would be a static and vulnerable one indeed. The vitality and flexibility of Chinese Muslim knowledge depended on its ability to produce a growing—and distinctly Chinese—textual tradition that was in dialogue with the traditions (Chinese, Arabic, and Persian) that preceded it.

*The Scholar as a Rescuer/
Preserver of Knowledge*

That a community based only on foreign books would be fragile, to say the least, is reflected in Chinese Muslim lore regarding the “discovery” of specific texts. Such lore is replete with tales of the lone copy of an important text being “rescued” by a valiant scholar, shared generously with others, and translated for posterity.

The appearance of a book, particularly an important one, would have been a pivotal event that later generations chose to commemorate through reconstructed, mythic memory. Not surprisingly, just as key figures in the Chinese Muslim educational system (Hu Taishi, for example) were given divine or mystical origins, so, too, were books. Such was the case with one of the central texts in Chinese Islamic tradition, the discovery of which was portrayed as taking place in quasi-mystical or, at the very least, mysterious circumstances.

The tale is attached to the third-generation teacher Hai Wenxuan, the purported “discoverer” of the *Muftah al-'ulum* (Key to

the sciences; in Zhao's account, the 米夫塔哈歐魯姆),²⁰ an Arabic text known throughout the Islamic scholarly world. The text includes material that would have been vitally important to Chinese Muslims eager for authentic knowledge of the Muslim west—commentary on Arabic grammar and sections on correct, phonetic pronunciation of Arabic.²¹ Most appealing, for its scholarly minded Chinese readers, was the opening line of the book, a citation of the *hadith* that urged Muslim scholars to “seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave” (*Utlubu al-'ilm min al-mahd ila al-lahd*).²²

By Zhao's account, Hai Wenxuan received an anonymous tip “that the local chieftain of the Salar village of Hehuang 河皇,²³ a man surnamed Han 韓, was in possession of a copy of the book, one that Hai had sought for many years. In response, Hai led his disciples on a visit to [the] Salar [village] with the intention of copying the book” (*JXCP*, p. 32).

Han was at first accommodating and ready to hand the book over to his guests. Upon hearing, however, that they intended to divide it up and copy it, he grew fearful that his guests would damage (“tear apart”) the book through careless treatment and therefore hid it and refused to turn it over (*JXCP*, p. 32).²⁴ Even after much begging and beseeching, the man still refused. Hai Wenxuan finally managed to obtain the book only when a mysterious “old

20. The book, by Siraj Al-din al-Sakkākī (1169–1229), was popular from the time of its introduction into Chinese Muslim schools. It was used in all Muslim schools in China, and Zhao mentioned a number of teachers who used the book in class. The book is also cited by Liu Zhi as one of the works he used for his texts; see Leslie and Wassel, “Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih,” p. 96.

21. Near the beginning of the book is chart of the human mouth with a detailed explanation of the correct pronunciation on the different Arabic letters, an invaluable tool in an environment so remote from the Arabic-speaking lands. The same chart was later replicated in many Chinese Muslim primers for the study of Arabic.

22. Al-Sakkākī, *Miftah al-'ulum*, p. 1. It would have been even more appealing if another version of this *hadith* had been used, one that reads “seek knowledge even unto China” (*Utlubu al-'ilm min walaw bi al-Sin*); for a discussion, see Ben-Dor, “Even Unto China,” pp. 93–94.

23. The village is located in the eastern part of modern Qinghai province.

24. The Salars, who are designated a national minority in China today, are Muslims concentrated in northwestern China (usually outside the boundaries of “China proper”).

man wearing a turban” appeared and gave Hai a different copy, after being convinced of Hai’s genuine and sincere scholarly interest in the text (*JXCP*, pp. 32–33). The text subsequently became an important one within Chinese scholarly circles and was later given a Chinese title, one that expresses its importance: *Wenyao* 文鑰 (Key to [literary] culture).

Most immediately striking in this tale are the rarity of Islamic texts and the lengths to which the devoted scholar would go to find them. These dominant themes lend themselves to ready interpretation. Clearly, the sense of spatial disconnection from the fount of Islamic knowledge was acute and was underscored by the paucity of Islamic texts in China. There was a thirst for books and knowledge about Islam, which the devoted scholar would go far to quench. The true scholar, the tale implies, spends his life in pursuit (at times literal) of knowledge. Most significant, however, is the fragility of the text itself, which is highlighted by the owner’s fear of its destruction. Note the distinction between the book’s owner, who acts as an isolated individual (he lives in a village and is jealous of his possession), and Hai, who travels with his disciples, as part of a community concerned with the sharing and circulation of knowledge. The teacher (appropriately willing to make great efforts in the pursuit of knowledge) makes a trip with his students (a stand-in for the intellectual community as a whole) to a remote location (perhaps allegorical for the Islamic west) in the hopes that he will discover that which he has desired for a long time (just as the Chinese Muslim community had long sought knowledge of Islam). His interest is purely scholarly, a point emphasized in his dialogue with the old man wearing a turban, who serves as Hai’s ally during the dispute with the owner of the book. Han, the owner, does not fully appreciate the need to obtain and preserve the knowledge inside the book; rather, he is interested in saving the book itself—the material object—which he probably did not read. Hai, on the other hand, understands that the book’s contents must be shared.

There is, however, another implicit distinction in the story. Zhao is well aware of the fundamental difference between the Chinese Muslims and the village headman. He mentions the man’s ethnicity (Salar), he uses a title (*tusi* 土司) that makes it clear that

this man is not Chinese,²⁵ and yet he states that Han is a “man of our teaching” (*wu jiao ren* 吾教人). This suggests that Chinese Muslim scholars distinguished between themselves and those who shared their faith but were not Chinese. Clearly, the status of being Chinese *and* Muslim was unique—and superior—and it is on behalf of the Chinese Muslims that Hai undertakes to obtain the book.²⁶

Finally, the story’s most intriguing detail: the “old man in a turban.” As we shall below, mysterious men with turbans played a key role in Chinese Muslims imagination. In this story this is a detail that carried multivalent meanings. First and foremost, of course, is the fact that the old man is depicted through the standard Chinese iconography for the Muslim west. Muslims in China did not wear turbans, but they knew that their co-religionists to the west did. The old man’s turban testifies to his authenticity and suggests that he—like the book itself—originates in the western Islamic world. Hai and his entourage (again, stand-ins for the Chinese Muslim scholarly community) are legitimated by the old man’s presence and most especially by his intercession on their behalf. The turban, moreover, bears connotations not simply of westernness but of erudition. A turban was the quintessential mark of the learned in the Muslim world, where scholars were known as “people of the turban.”²⁷ It is not farfetched to think that Zhao might even have intended a parallel between the old man’s turban

25. The title *tusi* 土司 was in Chinese administrative use since the Yuan dynasty. During the Ming and Qing, it was the key element in a system (*tusi zhidu* 土司制度) of supervision and control over the non-Han natives of these regions (many of them Muslims, such as the Monghurs and Salars). During the Ming-Qing transition and its aftermath, local *tusi* played an important role in military conflicts. In general they tended to be loyal to the ruling dynasty. For example, they crushed a Tibetan revolt in 1642, and many of them opposed the Ming rebel Li Zicheng, tried to prevent him from taking over the regions west and northwest of Gansu and Shaanxi, and massacred many of his soldiers in 1644. Li Zicheng later got revenge by killing many of them when he finally conquered the region. See Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, p. 688. On the *tusi* system during the nineteenth century, see Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou*, pp. 39–41.

26. For a cogent discussion of the construction of different “Chinese” Muslim identities and the role of comparison with other Muslim groups plays in group self-definition, see Gladney, “Relational Alterity.”

27. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*, pp. 102–3.

and the cap (*guan* 冠) in the Han Chinese context, in which it was a sign of literati status.

The *Genealogy* tells another dramatic tale concerning the discovery of the *Mirsad al-'Ibad min al-mabda ila al-ma'ad* (The path of God's bondsmen from origin to return; in Chinese *Mi'ersa de* 米尔撒德), a Persian Sufi work (for more on this work, see Chapter 3) (*JXCP*, p. 34). The *Mirsad* ultimately came to be the most popular book studied in schools throughout the Islamic world and was translated into Chinese about seventy years after its "discovery." In Zhao's time it was one of the best-known and most pivotal books of the Chinese Muslim educational curriculum. Some teachers with a strong inclination to Sufism, such as She Yunshan, were particularly attached to it and introduced it to every school they visited.²⁸

As the story goes, the teacher Feng Bo'an was on his way to Menghua, in Yunnan, where he hoped to meet a low-ranking official (an assistant subprefect, a graduate of the first degree), a certain Ma (郡庠馬生某). En route Feng encountered an old Muslim man (again, a "man of our teaching" 吾教耆). Upon hearing that Feng was in search of Ma, the old man told him that this Ma found himself in a most peculiar situation. The previous night, the old man told Feng,

Ma had dreamt [that] a man came to him and said "[Awake, for] the teacher who will teach you a classic is arriving!" Ma woke up startled, for he had no intention of studying a book; [since] he did not plan to follow the man's words [he went back to sleep]. When the same dream was repeated three times, he [finally] asked the man: "What classic is it?" and the man answered: "A classic hidden [under] the willow tree." Ma rose, and holding a lamp, he went to search [open] the willow tree. He consequently found a box containing a classic but did not know that his grandfather was the man who had left it behind. [Upon his arrival] the master [Feng] began to read [the classic], and found it astonishing; he examined the classic's title, which read: *mi er sa te* [*Mirsad*],²⁹ it was [a classic] that the eye had not seen before. Then he [Master Feng] said: "This classic

28. Zhao dedicated a special section to She's trip to Beijing, where he introduced the book to local scholars; see "Fudu jishi" 赴都記事 (Record of the journey to the capital), in *JXCP*, pp. 106–7.

29. The title of the *Mirsad* appears in varying transliterations in various texts, often replacing "d" sounds with "t" sounds.

never circulated in this land [China].” 吾教耆曰：“生某乞啓一事，昨宵某夢如人警之曰：‘如起授之師至矣！’某警而寤，蓋初無意習經，故不謀其說也，繼而複蒙者三，某始答之曰：‘何經也，’曰：‘經藏斯柜，’某起秉燭啓柜，果函一經，亦不知祖父何人之所遺也。”先初閱，已驚異之，及稽經名，曰‘米爾撒特’，目所未睹者。乃曰：“此經茲土未傳。” (JXCP, p. 34)

The story concludes with an account of Feng Bo'an's rapid (ten-day) mastery of the book's wonders and mysteries and a summary of its principles and literary style. Ultimately, Feng tells the Ma of its contents, returns to Tongxin, and begins teaching the newfound *Mirsad* to his students (JXCP, p. 34).

Again, the central emphasis is on the “foreignness” of the knowledge with which Islamic scholars are concerned and the difficulty of obtaining it. The story is at heart one of origins—both of the text and of the Chinese Muslim intellectual community itself. Feng emphasizes that this is the account of the *Mirsad*'s first appearance in China: “This classic never circulated in this land.” The story also affirms the antiquity of the book's knowledge, stating that it is an old “classic,” buried for years under a tree waiting to be (re)discovered.

As in the case of Hai and his book, the scholar's role in the story is that of a rescuer and disseminator of knowledge. Once again, the original possessor of the text does not recognize the value of the text. In the account of the *Mirsad*'s discovery, he is a fellow Chinese Muslim—who, incidentally, happens to be a Confucian degree holder. His initial disrespect for Islamic written knowledge dissolves when he is enlightened by the teachings of Feng. Thus the story “saves face” for Ma (the Confucian) by recounting that he went on to summon people with whom to share its contents. Evidently, Ma, an official degree holder, shares the scholarly values of Master Feng. Those who come at his summons, like the entourage of scholars in Hai's discovery of the *Key to the Sciences*, can be seen as stand-ins for the broader Chinese Muslim scholarly community.

Finally, once again, the circumstances of the text's discovery are tinged with mystical, mysterious tones. Its location is revealed through a dream (one of the most common prophetic media of the Islamic world) and its buried location underscores the hidden and

valued nature of its contents. The book, it seems, had lain beneath the tree for years, waiting for the arrival of a scholar worthy of its teachings. Its discovery, then, seems to be a matter as much of destiny as of circumstance and was predicated on a convergence of events, events prophetically foretold in the official's dream and brought to a head with the arrival of Feng Bo'an.

Dreams and prophecies aside, the story is a metaphorical reflection of very real circumstances impinging on the earliest Chinese Muslim scholars. The earliest members of the Islamic education system probably did perceive themselves as rescuers and preservers of knowledge. This process was literalized in Zhao's account as one of "unearthing," of retrieving knowledge buried deep within the ground. These early scholars felt that the antiquity and originality of this knowledge should be emphasized, especially since they were surrounded by a larger educated non-Muslim elite that took pride in its own ancient and original wisdom. The story also reflects the gradual process of curricular development, a process that was to a large extent random, since it relied on the fortuitous and unforeseen discovery of difficult to obtain texts.³⁰ Finally, the immediate introduction of both the *Key to the Sciences* and the *Mirsad* to a wider audience—a detail present in both stories—reflects the primary role of the scholar as a disseminator, sharer, and translator of knowledge.

The Teacher-Scholar and His Powers of Learning

The most important qualities, then, of the Chinese Muslim literatus were, on one hand, the ability to interpret and translate knowledge and, on the other, the willingness and desire to share it. In short, one had to be both a scholar and a teacher. The two activities were closely interwoven and together constituted an ideal type.

30. By Zhao's time the process of textual acquisition was more or less complete, whereas in the earliest generations covered by his *Genealogy* it was still in process. For this reason stories such as the two summarized here appear only in the first part of the *Genealogy*, which is concerned with the first three generations of teachers.

Zhao Can describes a number of figures who conformed to this ideal type and who embodied the highest values of the Chinese Muslim literati community: erudition, humility, pedagogy, and community-mindedness. In addition to these, skills such as powerful memory were particularly esteemed. Scholars were invariably to be revered for these qualities and not for their celebrity or fame.

For example, Ma Zhenwu was widely admired for his “broad learning and powerful memory” (*bowen qiang ji* 博聞強記) (*JXCP*, p. 51).³¹ Ma Zhenwu, a student in Xi’an during the 1620s, returned to his native Nanjing upon the completion of his studies. Knowledge, however, was not all that he had gained in Xi’an; it seems that he had also developed a strong sense of his own self-importance. Back in Nanjing, all the people “honored him greatly,” perhaps, indeed, too much. The people looked up to Ma Zhenwu “as if he was very distant from them.” This disheartened Ma Junshi, another teacher in Nanjing, “who lost all his followers to Ma Zhenwu” (*JXCP*, p. 52).

Zhao Can’s disapproval of the honors granted to Ma Zhenwu is palpable. Having described the adulatory mania surrounding Ma Zhenwu, Zhao observed: “Now as for our Way, it values the learning, not the man” 蓋吾之道，重學而不重人也 (*JXCP*, p. 52). Implied, too, is a disapproval of Ma Zhenwu’s disregard for his colleague. When Ma Zhenwu shortly became the head teacher, Ma Junshi finally could take no more “and admonished him for having encouraged and reveled in his exalted state.” The dejected Ma Junshi then set off to study in Xi’an (預度間，真吾先生首座，先生恥之，於是出都; *JXCP*, p. 52). Ma Junshi’s humility is underscored by the fact that upon his departure from Nanjing, he continued to study, the primary activity of the Chinese Muslim literatus.

Zhao’s disapproval of Ma Zhenwu is all the more striking because Zhao provided a detailed account of Ma Zhenwu’s staggering powers of memory and his erudition.

31. At least six other teachers were blessed with amazing powers of memory: Chang Yunhua, Li Yanling, Ma Minglong, Li Dinghuan 釐定寰, She Yunshan, and Feng Tongyu.

To this day people praise the master's fondness of study. In studying the *Maqamāt*³² [poems], a book that contained many unexpected and obscure words and was therefore ranked as an advanced book, and that had fifty chapters, each chapter about three pages, each page thirty-eight lines, plus phrases of commentary of about seventy thousand or eighty thousand words—the master studied earnestly, each day one chapter, which he was able to memorize, altogether fifty days, and as long as he lived he never forgot [what he had memorized]. 至今人稱先生嗜學，向習“母咯麼忒，”經中多意外昧語，乃品位進級之經也，計章五十（每章約三頁每頁三十八行並講義字句約七八萬言）先生熟讀，每章一日，共五十日，終身不忘。（*JXCP*, p. 51）

Clearly, Ma was a scholar possessed of powerful abilities and talents. Ma Zhenwu is praised not for any specific religious qualities (piety, adherence to Islamic law, or the like) but for his erudition and for his mastery of difficult texts. The criticism that he is too much revered, then, is directed as much at his adulators as at Ma Zhenwu himself. What is to be admired is Ma's *learning*, not Ma the celebrity or personality.

This high regard for memorization was not, of course, by any means unique to the Chinese Muslims. Both the Chinese and the Islamic educated elites placed a strong emphasis on rote memorization. As Elman and Woodside note, it was “a cultural act of great meaning for Han Chinese elites.”³³ Memorization not only was a technical skill in the service of learning but was also held in high regard in its own right.

In a study of elementary education in the Lower Yangzi region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Angela Ki Che Leung points out that memorization was an important tool in children's education and helped “stimulate their intelligence.” According to Leung, regardless of the differences in teachers' ideas on children's

32. The book in question appears in transliterated form as *mu ge ma te*, which undoubtedly means *maqamāt* (poems). The description of the structure of the text also supports this. There were several poetry books in use in the system, but Zhao did not specify in this case which one is associated with the story of Ma Zhenwu.

33. This feature was not unique to the Islamic and Chinese education systems. Elman and Woodside point out that this was the case also in early modern European society. See Alexander Woodside and Benjamin Elman, “Afterword,” in Woodside and Elman, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 532.

capacity to understand the classics, all agreed "on one essential aspect of the learning of the Classics, which is also the best-known characteristic of classical primary education: drilling and rote memory."³⁴ As a matter of fact, argues Leung, memory was considered the quintessential indicator of intelligence, and an intelligent child was expected to memorize a great number of texts in the shortest time possible.³⁵ Leung cites a popular text from the eighteenth century. Its description resembles Zhao's account of the early studies of Ma Zhenwu and other Chinese Muslim scholars:

The night breeze is disturbed by the cries of the crows, those pupils altogether showing off the strength of their throats: Chao-Ch'ien-Sun-Li-Chou-Wu-Cheng, Heaven-Earth-Black-Yellow-Cosmos; after the *thousand characters* it's *Ch'ie lueh*, when the *Hundred Surnames* is revised it's *Poems for the Child*; that exceptional one amongst the class memorizes three lines a day of the *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*.³⁶

Elman and Woodside venture that memorization may have "reflected enormous cultural anxiety" and the emphasis on it was a symptom of a perceived connection between memorization and identity: "Was the memorization, perhaps, a venture into the 'defensive articulation' on a very large scale of 'who we are' and 'who we are not,' a mission that compelled millions of examination-taking people to adopt a certain identity?"³⁷ Certainly, memorization is a powerful means of inculcating a specific and prescribed body of knowledge and, as such, is clearly a potentially forceful shaper of identity. Since, in addition to memorizing Chinese characters and large portions of the Chinese histories and classics, Chinese Muslim scholars had also to memorize Islamic texts, their own identity was strongly shaped by both traditions.

Repetition, rote learning, and memorization were vital elements in the process of learning and were recognized and prized for the implied uniformity they cultivated. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "rulers, officials, and examiners

34. Leung, "Elementary Education in the Lower Yangtze Region," p. 394.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 395.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

37. Woodside and Elman, "Afterword," in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 532.

all became convinced that pious recital of the Four Books and Five Classics by Han Chinese students represented an act of faith in Confucian moral values and submission to imperial political sovereignty.”³⁸ This analysis suggests a top-down approach to the interpretation of memorization’s cultural meaning—that Han Chinese students “submitted” to state power through memorization of state-sanctioned texts. That Chinese Muslims of the period also emphasized memorization of Confucian classics (despite the fact that they were often disconnected from the state educational system) suggests that memorization as a shaper of identity also worked from the bottom up; that state norms were not simply imposed on students through education but were in fact supported and shaped by the voluntary participation of scholars outside the state educational and examination systems. The memorization of Islamic texts—texts that Chinese Muslim scholars understood as harmonious with Confucian values—further underscores the ways in which activity that fell outside the purview of the state and its educational institutions could nevertheless support and bolster its ideologies.

The western Islamic educated elite placed a similar emphasis on the memorization of texts. As in the case of Chinese elites, a good memory was taken as a sign of intellectual competence. Shaykhs in the medieval Islamic world gave public performances in which they reproduced texts from memory. Scholars of the period repeatedly stressed that “the true possession of a book . . . was internal, as the ‘two wings’ of *‘ilm* [knowledge] were memory and oral discussion.”³⁹ Chamberlain’s study of biographical dictionaries found frequent references to the ability of certain scholars to memorize texts rapidly. One scholar, for example, “never heard anything without memorizing it, and never memorized anything and then forgot it.”⁴⁰

In the Islamic world, the cultural importance of memorization was strongly tied to the *preservation* of knowledge. Books as mate-

38. Woodside and Elman, “Afterword,” in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 533.

39. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*, p. 145.

40. Ibid.

rial objects could always be destroyed, especially by fire,⁴¹ or otherwise disappear. Memorization was perceived as true learning and the true possession of knowledge. As one shaykh studied by Chamberlain averred, "If you are incapable of memorizing, then accumulating books will do you no good."⁴² Keeping knowledge in one's head was always safer; mere reading was never enough and was always inferior. Chamberlain's study refers to one shaykh who, lamentably, had "no studies and no knowledge except from reading."⁴³

Memorization, then, played several different roles. Dominant among these were the ways in which it helped to consolidate a prescribed identity and its critical function as preserver and safeguard of knowledge. In a cultural milieu in which printed knowledge was hard to come by and physically fragile, memorization was a vital means of protecting against its loss. Both of these functions of memorization, as identity-shaper and knowledge-protector, are relevant in the Chinese Muslim case. Clearly, Chinese Muslims shared the view common among Chinese elites that a powerful memory attested to intellectual competence. In addition, memorization was functionally important to the Chinese Muslim intellectual elite. On one hand, Chinese Muslim identity as simultaneously Chinese and Muslim was forged in part through memorization of large chunks of material from both the Chinese and the Islamic settings. On the other, anxiety about the material existence and the rarity of Islamic books led, quite naturally, to an emphasis on the memorization of texts as a means of preserving them.

The powers of memory ascribed to Ma Zhenwu were shared by an array of scholars. The very best among them, in fact, had committed to memory not just the Islamic tradition but the Confucian tradition as well. Most concentrated first on Confucian works. Chang Yunhua, cofounder of the Jining school, began his scholarly career as a student of the Confucian classics, as did his childhood

41. Chamberlain (*ibid.*) gives two examples of shaykhs who see memorization as a defense against destruction of books and whole libraries by fire.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

friend Li Yanling. Like other scholars in the *Genealogy*, the two are remembered as talented students with a particular knack for memorization. From the age of seven, they had, for instance, the ability to “recite whatever they had read [even] just once and were also able to memorize a thousand characters a day.” Moreover, the two also read, studied, and memorized Tang dynasty poems (方七齡二先生同入儒讀書過目成誦日記千言偶閱唐詩遂法之咸能吟詠; *JXCP*, p. 56).⁴⁴

Their turn to Islamic studies is explained in terms of intellectual dissatisfaction. We are told that after studying the Chinese classics for a number of years, Chang decided that they were not enough. He intimated to his friend Li that they had learned all that they could from Chinese books and that they would now do better to study the Islamic classics (至十一齡常先生與計曰書中所求大約如斯而已莫若習經; *JXCP*, p. 56). Li agreed and duly told his parents, who gave him permission to study in the local mosque (李先生諾歸告父母咸允之入本坊學經; *JXCP*, p. 56). The two enrolled and once again demonstrated their talents, for whatever they were taught, they always remembered (凡所授輒記不忘; *JXCP*, p. 56). They studied all Islamic books “from *Fasl* to *Saraf*,”⁴⁵ and the more they learned, the more they found it enjoyable (及接“非斯黎”至“塞而夫”諸經乃笑曰漸得佳境矣).⁴⁶ Chang was particularly diligent and often stayed awake all night studying beside the lantern (*JXCP*, p. 56).

Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling began their studies at about the same age that boys born to non-Muslim gentry families would have begun theirs. Their studies at a local school, or at home, constituted the first steps in what might in turn lead to a successful career as an examination candidate. They studied Chinese characters and the Confucian classics, as well as Tang poetry (including recitation and

44. Li Yanling was probably seven years old and Chang two years older.

45. The two books are the Persian Sufi *Chahar fasl* (Four chapters; in Chinese transliteration *fei si li*), and the Arabic *Saraf* (Grammar; in Chinese transliteration *sai er fu*). The first was later translated into Chinese by one of Chang's students, and the latter is an essential part of the curriculum in every *madrasa* in the Islamic world.

46. The Islamic texts appear in the story under their original Arabic and Persian titles and are referred to as *jing*—“classics.”

calligraphy). This early stage of education was probably common to many of the other teachers mentioned in the *Genealogy*.

Interestingly, the turn to the study of Islam required permission from one's parents (歸告父母咸允之入本坊學經; *JXCP*, p. 56). Apparently not all Muslim parents encouraged Islamic studies. Finally, the reason for the transition from Confucian to Muslim education was ostensibly scholarly and not religious; the root cause was the sense that the Chinese classics were not satisfying for the young Chinese Muslim intellect. For particularly brilliant students, like Li and Chang, full intellectual satisfaction could be found only somewhere else—in the study of Islamic texts.

Other students, too, had remarkable intellectual powers. She Yunshan, a Muslim convert and the student of Li and Chang, was able to grasp with remarkable rapidity the innermost meanings of the works he studied. Whereas Li and Chang sought to challenge their intellects by mastering two traditions, She attempted to quench his thirst for knowledge by traveling throughout the Chinese Muslim educational network. It took him less than a month to read several texts and completely grasp their subtleties, to be able to recite the *hadith*, and to advise the people (不逾月讀尊經數本盡得其妙能宣聖諭以勸大眾).⁴⁷

Zhao's text describes a conversation between She and his childhood teacher, Master Yang, regarding the study of Islamic texts (the "venerated classics," *zunjing* 尊經). Already at this early stage, She wanted to study more. He asked his teacher, "Is this the point [having learned several books] where the study of the venerated classics ceases?" 遂謂師曰尊經之習止此乎. Yang reassured his pupil that there was a good deal more to study: "The learning of the classics is like a sea. He who is well versed in their principles can study other classics; one who does not travel for the sake of study-

47. In Chinese the term *shengyu* 聖諭 usually refers to imperial edicts. However, in this case I chose to translate it as *hadith*, both because it makes more sense and because in later texts the term appears as a translation of *hadith*. In 1923 a mosque in Beijing published a two-volume book entitled *Shengyu xiangjie* 聖諭詳解 (Detailed explanation of *hadith*), a copy of which can be found in the New York Public Library. Translation questions aside, the use of the term *shengyu* for *hadith* is another example of Chinese Muslim usage of Chinese terms in a Muslim context.

ing will not be able to reach completeness” 經學如海通理方能究其他經也非游學不能大成. She’s response to this statement was another question: “At the present, where is the most flourishing place of heavenly studies?” 曰今天學何地最盛. His master’s response was: “Shaanxi, Hubei, Jiangsu—all have scholars. Their way of teaching is exemplary; men of ability are gathering [in these places] in large numbers.” However, the master added, “There is no one like the two masters Chang and Li of Jining” 無如濟水常李二師 (*JXCP*, p. 84).⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter She Yunshan went to Jining to study under the two great masters. It is clear from this conversation that by 1650 the educational network was already perceived as extremely large and that Li Yanling and Chang Yunhua were already famous.

Jining was not the only place where She studied, but it was there that he spent most of his time as a student. He also visited Nanjing and finally Kaifeng, where he began his own, extremely active, career as a teacher. Just as She’s travels demonstrate his commitment to a broad community of learning, so, too, does his innovative method of scholarship. She is described as studying in the company⁴⁹ of other students (in She’s case these were Feng Tongyu and Ma Yong’an 馬永安, both of whom became prominent teachers in their own right). The three would study each book together, asking one another questions about its meaning and content. She’s skill at this activity was unsurpassed and he was able to answer even the most difficult of questions. In fact, he never failed to produce an answer (爲問難先生百無一窘; *JXCP*, p. 85). He also demonstrated his ability to study and learn with great speed. For example, he studied the *Musabih* in “less than a month” (米斯巴哈不逾月而畢; *JXCP*, p. 85).

She’s life reflects the strong emphasis placed on communal knowledge and communal learning by the Chinese Muslim scholarly elite. Just as the translation of texts was understood as a means by which knowledge could be shared and disseminated, so, too, were study and teaching understood primarily as communal activi-

48. Here *Jishui* stands for Jining.

49. The term used by Zhao for She’s classmates is *tongchuang* 同窗.

ties, in which the line between student and teacher ideally became blurred, and the two behaved as colleagues, members of the same community.

*Geographical Location and
the Transmission of Knowledge*

The reverence and respect directed toward specific teachers and students by Zhao in his *Genealogy* is a reflection, of course, of their erudition, their powers of memorization, and their distinguished scholarship, among other “scholarly” or intellectual attributes. But the recognition of these attributes was not limited solely to the scholarly arena. They also represented a form of social capital, as is clear from the numerous cases of scholars who were married to prominent women solely on the basis of their scholarly qualities.

This situation is reflected in the sad story of Ma Minggao 馬鳴皋, a disciple of Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling in Jining, who was reluctant to parlay his cultural capital as scholar into social capital. Ma was known both for his erudition and learning and especially for his teaching abilities (學業大成 . . . 送學習經; *JXCP*, p. 63). This made him sought after in Jining, and several families were interested in marrying a daughter to the prodigy (本坊有女者爭妻之). To this end, the community even asked him to open and run a school for girls (請開女學; *JXCP*, p. 63).⁵⁰ The prudish Ma, however, just wanted to study and was not interested in marriage. Eventually, he was forced to marry into the Bai 白 clan, a rich family that managed to make him marry one of its members, a wealthy and beautiful widow (*JXCP*, p. 63).⁵¹ After much negotiation, the reluctant groom agreed to the match on the condition

50. This is the only instance known to me in which the possibility of education for women is raised. I have found no other evidence for Islamic education for women at the time.

51. The story is so complicated that I have exiled it to a footnote. While attempting to negotiate the marriage, the Bai family sent some gifts to Ma Minggao, who accepted them. When Ma refused the marriage offer, the Bai family argued that in accepting the gifts he had agreed to marry the widow. Ma Minggao disputed this claim, but he was ultimately persuaded by one of his disciples (who had been bribed by the Bais) to the contrary.

that he and his wife not live with the Bais. Consequently, after the wedding the couple moved to a remote village in Shunde prefecture in Guangdong province (婚後果遷順得府; *JXCP*, pp. 63–64).⁵² As a result, lamented Zhao in the concluding the tale, Ma ceased to teach and “did not transmit his learning” 惜乎未逢美館其學無傳 (*JXCP*, p. 64).

Zhao’s concern here is not that Ma got married—he makes much of the fact that Ma was so sought after and takes it as a reflection and proof of Ma’s high standing as a scholar—but with Ma’s decision to move to a remote area, where he was unable to continue his teaching. Most noteworthy in the story is the fact that Ma, presumably neither a wealthy man nor one of a particularly prestigious background, is a sought-after husband for a wealthy, beautiful woman (albeit a widow) from an important family. Zhao’s lament also reveals how strong was the collective aspect of the scholarly work undertaken within the boundaries of the education network. Once Ma moved beyond these boundaries, his scholarly contribution was lost.

A second tale that demonstrates the ways in which scholarly cultural capital was a fungible asset and could be converted into social capital is that of Feng Tongyu. In this case we see a different, and arguably more significant, sort of social capital being gained as a result of learning and great erudition. Whereas Ma’s scholarship earned him an unwanted wife, Feng Tongyu’s bought him the ultimate social recognition: the esteem of western Muslim scholars.

Zhao appended a special segment entitled “Suini xuezhe zhong zhi di yi liuye” 雖呢學者中之第一流也 (The first among the scholars of al-Sin [China]) to Feng’s biography (*JXCP*, p. 75). Here we learn that after his graduation from the school in Xi’an, Feng was particularly interested in training in Islamic jurisprudence (*feige* 費格; Arabic, *fiqh*); specifically, he wanted to work on Islamic inheritance laws. Zhao stressed that “even though there was

52. No doubt this marriage was an unusual event at the time, and there were probably other, unvoiced reasons involved in this strange story. Perhaps it is simply better to say that apparently Ma hated his new relatives and perhaps was also ashamed to have married a widow, which may explain the move from Shandong to Guangdong in the far south outside the educational network.

a western book on inheritance law, the *Fei la yi te*,⁵³ it was never studied or taught” 初茲土有費喇意特乃西域分受家財之經亦未傳講。Feng studied this book with great concentration and care for many days until he understood its meaning completely and with clarity (先生潛心細閱研究多日竟洞悉其意; *JXCP*, p. 75). Feng then met with a visiting Arabic-speaking Muslim scholar, to whom he demonstrated his knowledge of Islamic law. The guest praised Feng, declaring that he was the first among the scholars of al-Sin (曰雖呢[中國之譯也]學者之第一流也; *JXCP*, pp. 75-76). (Apparently out of a desire to transmit the words of the guest faithfully, Zhao used the Arabic name for China, al-Sin, in its transliterated form. For readers to whom the term is unfamiliar, he explained that it meant “China.”)⁵⁴

The scholarly attributes so praised by Zhao and other Chinese Muslim chroniclers were convertible into social capital of various sorts. Chinese Muslim scholars functioned within three different social spheres: the Chinese Muslim education system and its immediate constituency; the world of western Islamic scholarship and intellectual tradition; and the Han Chinese intellectual and cultural tradition. Chinese Muslim scholars existed at the interstices of all three and understood themselves as participants in all of them. Indeed, their distinct identity was predicated on the ways in which the Chinese Muslim literatus, in his very person, blurred the distinctions among these various cultural and social categories. Scholarship and the status of a scholar gave social access to, and gained social validation from, the Chinese Muslim constituency and from the western Islamic intellectual establishment.

What, then, of the third social milieu from which Chinese Muslim scholars sought recognition and validation? Scholarship, in this instance, too, was the central means through which Chinese Mus-

53. The term *fei la yi te* does not refer to a specific book. My guess is that it is a transliteration of *fara'id*, a generic term for Islamic inheritance and property law. A collection of treatises on the subject entitled *Farai'd* by Sirag al-Din Muhammad (b. Muhammad al-Sagawandi; fl. late thirteenth century), could be the one, but there is no way to be sure.

54. Zhao (*JXCP*, p. 76) concludes the story by adding that subsequently the book has been taught in the education network (蓋費喇意特自先生創思而傳之也).

lim identity was rendered socially intelligible and important. Chinese Muslim scholars, through their scholarship, were able to craft an identity within the cultural norms of Han Chinese society and, ideally, were (again through their scholarship) able to earn recognition and validation from that society. Through their scholarship, Chinese Muslims were able to see a “realm of historically determined possibility” in which it was plausible for them to think that non-Muslim Chinese society might accept them as true literati.

*The Muslim Scholar
as Chinese Literatus*

As we have seen, the ideal Chinese Muslim scholar of Zhao’s text is well read, possessed of remarkable powers of interpretation and concentration, and part of a broader and recognized scholarly community. He reveres his own tradition and adds to its knowledge, and is familiar with Confucian tradition as well. Not surprisingly, then, the ideal Chinese Muslim viewed himself as nothing other than a “literatus.” In many instances throughout the *Genealogy*, Zhao referred to or cited scholars referring to themselves as *shi*, “literati.”

The term *duanshi* 端士 (upright literati) or, alternatively, *shi* occurs throughout the *Genealogy* as a general reference to Chinese Muslim teachers. For example, in his biography of Chang Yunhua, Zhao wrote “at [this] time, people considered the four masters [Chang] Yunhua, [Li] Dinghuan, [Ma] Junshi, and [Ma] Minglong as the central figures among eastern [i.e., Chinese] literati” 然時人以蘊華，定寰，君實，明龍四先生爲東土學者之四鎮云。 In another place in the section on Chang, Zhao also refers to the scholars of network as “talented literary men” 才人文士 (*JXCP*, p. 58). Zhao’s choice of the term “literati” is deliberate and reflects his community’s understanding of its importance as that understanding was filtered through dominant Chinese cultural categories.

Zhao’s account of Ma Minglong, a teacher from Wuchang, includes the following story:⁵⁵

55. For the entire story, see *JXCP*, pp. 45–46.

Ma Minglong's residence adjoined the mosque. On occasion, officials used to come and inspect the mosque. One day various officials⁵⁶ came by the mosque, and Master Ma saw them and came out to welcome them in. The officials asked Ma: "You, who are you?" 諸司曰汝何人也. Ma answered: "The Muslim school manager" 先生曰清真掌教.⁵⁷ The officials asked: "What is [the purpose of] this teaching?" 曰何爲教. Ma responded: "It is called the teaching that cultivates the Way (Dao)" 即修道之謂教也. The officials kept asking: "How [does one] cultivate that Way?" 曰所修何道. Ma replied: "Following one's natural disposition, [this is] to cultivate; this cultivation is like a way of governing that causes peaceful conditions" 率性而修即修齊治平之道. The officials were not satisfied with the answer and replied: "Now, do not speak of 'governing that causes peaceful conditions,' [what you call] following one's natural disposition, how can you explain it?" 曰且毋論修齊治平所云率性何以解之. Ma replied: "Following one's natural disposition is to obliterate selfish benefits and restore [bring back] the natural order, thus achieving a nature of stability [equanimity]; if a man follows this, than the Dao can be reached" 曰率性乃克去己私. The officials nodded their heads and expressed satisfaction, and then asked: "You [Islamic] teachers, you seem to be carefree men outside the world of concerns, isn't that just being like those kinds of Buddhists and Daoists who make light of things in front of rulers? How is it, then, that you behave with excessive respect?" 諸司點首稱善又曰汝等掌教亦似物外閑人其如釋道之流則有笑傲于王公之前者汝何若是之足添也. Ma replied: "The ethics of our teaching and those of the Confucian teaching are the same. Whoever follows our precepts and laws takes loyalty to rulers and obedience to parents as a duty. How can this be compared with fatherless and rulerless ill-behaved Buddhists and Daoists?" 曰吾教與儒教同倫理凡循禮法者必以忠君孝親爲事業豈可以無父無君之狂妄釋道爲

56. Zhao used the title *zhusidaofu* 諸司道府, of which there is no record. However, *sidao* 司道, the main part of title, could mean a number of bureaucrats at the provincial level, such as treasury commissioner and salt (or grain) commissioner. It could also mean a provincial judge. This makes sense also because Wuchang was the capital of Hubei.

57. The term *zhangjiao*, used by Ma Minglong to identify himself, meant a Muslim cleric during the Yuan dynasty. It could be an imam, preacher, or a muazzin (a group known in Chinese as the *san zhangjiao* 三掌教, the "three clerics"). Rawski (*Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, p. 38) translates the term as "school manager." I chose to follow Rawski, even though it is reasonable to assume that Ma Minglong was also serving as an imam or preacher, since while identifying himself for the official he mentions the name of the religion—Islam. Furthermore, the term used during that period and the term used by Zhao for imam is *ah-hong* (Persian for "imam").

比也。The officials saw that his answer was not coarse and that furthermore it was proper and not irrelevant, and said: "We heard that you have classics in your teaching. May we see them?" 諸司見其出言不俗亦禮而不褻曰聞汝教有經可許觀乎。Ma answered in the affirmative, invited the officials in, opened for them a portfolio [of books] to inspect 開篋呈覽。Then [Ma] took a book,⁵⁸ and reading slowly from the contents, he explained its principles, nature, and sources; he expounded upon its excellent important points and went to the heart of everything that had never come forth from Confucianism [and therefore, that would be unfamiliar] 先生從容緩言以講而其理性淵源闡揚機妙盡屬儒書中之所未發。[In response], all the dignitaries inclined [attentively] and listened quietly; there was not one who dared to utter a sound or cough 各上台側耳靜聽無敢聲嗽之者。Afterward they kept coming on other occasions to listen to more. Within ten days they awarded him [Ma] with a horizontally inscribed board with words of praise, raised the rank of his house, and gave him a school manager's certificate with belt and cap [thus making him] equal with those wearing caps [the literati] 旌獎匾額森列其廬給掌教牒並帶冠焉。

The story suggests that Islamic schools were subject to some sort of systematic official inspection by the late Ming. The term *zhangjiao* 掌教 was not an official title but was commonly used to refer to the masters of lower-ranking local schools. *Zhangjiao* were usually members of the local elite who were in charge of the financial affairs of the local school. According to one school regulation cited by Evelyn Rawski, a *zhangjiao* should be "an upright and well-to-do person who can succor the various charitable schools. The major thing is that the head scholar be one who contributes money in the locality. If he cannot manage it all, then ask one or two men in the village who are honest and upright to do it."⁵⁹

The manager was responsible for hiring teachers, supervising the curriculum, handling finances, and other administrative duties. He was also in charge of "greeting and escorting the local official on his tours of inspection."⁶⁰ *Zhangjiao*, therefore, were not appointed

58. The book is titled *Gesui* 略遂. I have so far been unable to identify the original Arabic or Persian title. It is not mentioned elsewhere in the *Genealogy*, nor in other Chinese Islamic texts. It is clear, however, that Zhao wants his readers to know that the book was an Islamic text.

59. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, p. 40.

60. Ibid.

by the state but by the local community surrounding the school. This is borne out in the story of Ma Minglong, who, we are told, was required to greet a group of local officials and invite them into the school to inspect the books taught there. This anecdote is not an adequate basis for speculating about the relations between Islamic schools and the state. What is significant about the story, however, is that, clearly, it was common for local officials to inspect local schools, Muslim and otherwise.

Again, Leung contends that at the local level the state played an indirect role in schools. The influence and role of "local societal leaders" in these schools was much more significant, however.⁶¹ Leung's contention, of course, is based on Han Chinese, and not Islamic, institutions of education. Interestingly, Zhao's account seems to indicate that the interest shown by the state and local government in Han Chinese institutions extended to Islamic ones as well. This suggests that state also recognized these sites as educational institutions and not (only) places of worship.

The core portion of the story, the dialogue between the officials and the Islamic school master, reveals much more. The officials are portrayed as having no knowledge of Islam; indeed, mingled with their curiosity is perhaps some contempt for its representative, Ma. Contempt and suspicion, however, are rapidly transformed into interest, respect, and appreciation.

The officials' newfound appreciation for Islam was no doubt abetted by Ma Minglong's opening words, words carefully chosen to make the compatibility of Confucian and Islamic "principles" clear. Ma's characterization of the foundational tenets of Islam is strikingly similar to the opening of a text the officials must have known very well. Ma's version of Islam's basic principle—that one is to follow one's natural disposition (*shuaixing er xiu* 率性而修)—is virtually a direct citation of the first line of the first chapter of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸): 天命之謂性率性之謂道修道之謂教 (What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow human nature is called the Way. Cultivating this

61. Leung, "Elementary Education in the Lower Yangtze Region."

Way is called teaching).⁶² The *Zhongyong*, originally a part of the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), was one of the Four Books, which had stood as the basis for Confucian moral teachings since the late Song dynasty, when it was declared by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) as part of the Confucian core curriculum and basic to the Confucian canon. As a part of the Four Books, this text was an integral part of the curriculum of every elementary school. Since the Song dynasty, it had also been a part of the examination curriculum.⁶³

By invoking the *Zhongyong*, Ma Minglong creates a common ground for dialogue with the officials, who react at first with some impatience. Initially suspicious, it seems, that Ma is misusing a text that is not really his, the officials gradually come to see that Ma has a deep understanding of its true meaning. Ma's second reply, in which he expounds upon what it means to "follow one's natural disposition," changes the officials' attitude toward him. From that point on, the newly established common ground begins to expand, and it becomes clear that the Muslim and his Confucian visitors share more than the simple belief that proper action stems from following one's natural disposition. First, both share negative views of Buddhists and Daoists and view their reputed lack of respect for parental and state authority as particularly problematic. Next, Ma's positive response to the officials' question "Do you have any classics?" establishes the value placed by both camps on a written body of knowledge. Ma Minglong's explication of the contents of one Islamic text demonstrates that Islam, too, has classics and implicitly suggests that Islam, as a source of knowledge, contains elements that, while unknown to Confucians, might nevertheless be meaningful and comprehensible to them.

Ma's presentation of Islamic knowledge exemplifies the way in which Islamic scholars in general viewed their work vis-à-vis its Confucian counterpart. Put simply, Ma Minglong presents Islam as a moral philosophy, not as a religion. He does not mention *Allah*

62. *Zhongyong*, chapter 1, verse 1; the translation is from Tu, *Centrality and Commonality*, pp. 5–6.

63. On the Four Books as a part of the examination curriculum, see Benjamin Elman, "Changes in Confucian Civil Service Examinations," in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, pp. 111–49.

or Muhammad when asked to explain the basic principles of his “teaching.” Rather than interpreting the officials’ questions as an attempt to learn about Islam as a religion, Ma understands their inquisition to be an invitation to intellectual and philosophical exchange, an exchange of and between scholars concerned with the same fundamental philosophical questions.

The story’s conclusion presents the outcome of the exchange as a complete and total victory for the schoolmaster, his school, and for Islam. Not only do the officials listen with reverence to an explication of Islam—there was not one among them who dared to make a sound or cough—but, more important, they conclude that what Ma has said of Islam is deserving of respect. They conclude that Islam and Confucianism are in harmony, and that Islam can in fact contribute to the understanding of Confucianism. The tokens of admiration given to Ma include a document asserting that his status is that of a literatus—a category associated with Confucian culture. One hardly need state the semiotic implications of the specific items given Ma.

In a tale from another source, entitled “Wang Daiyu Debates the Dao” (“Wang Daiyu tan dao” 王岱輿談道), which resembles many tales included in the *Genealogy*, we learn about Wang Daiyu’s encounter with a Buddhist monk. In “the seventh year of the Shunzhi reign” (1650, undoubtedly a fictitious date), Wang Daiyu is passing by a Buddhist temple in Beijing when a Buddhist monk emerges. In the ensuing dialogue, Wang “proves” the superiority of Islam by answering ten questions posed by Buddhist monk and by asking ten questions that the Buddhist cannot answer. The tale ends with the conversion of the monk to Islam.⁶⁴ This tale highlights the acute sense of social and cultural hierarchy and their position within it felt by Chinese Muslim scholars that we saw in Ma Minglong’s tale. In the first story, the representatives of the state visit a Muslim school, and in the end the equal status of Islam and Confucianism is recognized. In the second story, a Muslim “runs into” a monk while out on a stroll, bests him in argument, and

64. This oral tradition was first published in *Huijiao yuehua* 回教月刊 in 1938. For the full text, see HRZ (*Qingdai*) pp. 303–5.

converts him. Chinese Muslims knew very well, it seems, how to position themselves in stories they told about themselves.

Zhao's inclusion of the vignette about Ma Minglong and the officials is not incidental to his purpose. The story circulated widely throughout the various institutions of the Muslim educational system. It may well have been historically accurate. But its factual accuracy is perhaps the least of its many important features. The account of Ma's dialogue with the officials is, at heart, a tale about Zhao's understanding of the relationship between the learned Muslim Chinese community and the Confucian literary elite. It also constitutes precisely the sort of anecdotal material that Chamberlain has argued to be a vital, if less strictly "factual," source of information for those working with biographies and genealogies.

Zhao, writing several decades after the events he described, was clearly not limiting his information to the incontrovertibly factual. He put words into the mouths of his characters and his richly detailed and theatrical description of the enraptured officials leaning forward, intent on hearing Ma's explication of Islam, invites us to be eyewitnesses of the event. Yet Zhao was certainly not trying to fool his readers into thinking that he had firsthand knowledge of the events he described. The "truth" of Zhao's account lies in its "plausibility," to use Chamberlain's term. For Zhao, as for his community, the vignette tells the story not simply of one individual's encounter with specific Confucians but also—and more important—of the relationship between the Muslim Chinese and Confucian literary establishments. It was a relationship that inhabited the shared cultural ground provided by the category of the "literatus." From the standpoint of Chinese Muslim scholars, such categories were elastic and provided the possibility for inclusion within elite Chinese society.

Genealogy and Chinese Muslim Literati Identity

Aside from its factual and anecdotal content, Zhao's text itself—in its literary form and through its very existence—provides other indications of Chinese Muslim scholarly self-perception in the late seventeenth century. Having evaluated the contents of Zhao Can's

text, we can also situate the *Genealogy* within its historical and cultural context. Specifically, I am interested in the genre Zhao chose to convey his information.

Those versed in the various genres of literature employed by the Chinese literary elite from the twelfth century on will immediately find Zhao's text to be simultaneously familiar and surprising. It is familiar, of course, because the way in which Zhao structured his work—namely, as a genealogy of intellectual descent—is neither original nor unusual. Indeed, in Zhao's time, this genre was arguably at the height of its popularity. Although the genre had existed since before the twelfth century, we see more instances of it during the seventeenth century than during any other period of Chinese history. As Thomas Wilson has observed, the intensification we see in the production of such biographical genealogical writings was linked to the state's co-option of the genre and reflected efforts to combat that co-option: "These works . . . by the [time of the] Ming dynasty, had become a significant instrument in the propagation of state orthodoxy. Beginning in the seventeenth century, opponents of orthodoxy compiled anthologies organized into chapters of biographies on individual Confucians . . . or contending Confucian schools . . . although orthodox Confucians also compiled biographical anthologies."⁶⁵

Wilson is quite right in pointing out, however, that what occurred in the seventeenth century was not so much a proliferation of discrete instances of a specific sort of text as a multiplication of myriad variations within a broadly construed genre of literature. As he carefully notes, "This conception of the genre is formally variable and historically open in at least two senses. First, there is no founding text that establishes a taxonomy of formal characteristics to which all subsequent texts must conform or that engenders its own descendants. . . . Second, this conception of the genre enables us to see how and where Confucian anthologies overlap with other kinds of signifying practices."⁶⁶

Although Wilson is willing to grant a fairly high degree of flexibility and variation within the genre itself, he nevertheless consis-

65. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, p. 5.

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

tently defines the genealogical genre as an unfailingly, invariably, and fundamentally Confucian one. Indeed, Wilson points out that the genre was deployed precisely as an exclusionary measure, as a way of ruling out of the Confucian tradition many individuals (Confucians included) who were viewed as unworthy of inclusion within it. "When Sung Confucians began to speak of the past as a single lineage of sages who transmitted the Dao, they were doing two things: specifying the meaning of the Dao and excluding from Confucian tradition everyone who was not named. Practices of defining the tradition began to change in the Sung, and many Confucians were literally left out."⁶⁷ This exclusionary element makes the genealogical genre an obvious choice for chroniclers interested in imposing some sort of systematization, control, and definition on their communities. Hence the Muslim Chinese literary elite's use of a genre associated primarily with Confucian culture was both logical (in that it provided a readymade literary model with which to frame their own community in similarly elitist and defined terms) and interesting (in that Muslim Chinese literati evidently had no ideological or intellectual problem using a genre that was not specifically Muslim, or even Chinese Muslim).

Robert Gimello, another scholar concerned with biographical literatures that would fall under Wilson's inclusive definition of the genre (a definition that allows for flexibility within the genre itself), suggests that such an analysis is only partially correct. He urges us to see fundamental ways in which the biographical, genealogical genre of literature was not in fact strictly part of Confucian elite culture, and that that culture, and consequently its literatures, was subject to change from outside influences that adopted the same literary forms. Writing, for instance, of depictions of the Buddhist monk Faxiu, Gimello explains that [they] "allow[ed] Buddhism, precisely in its unflagging role as a critical tradition, to leave the cloister, so to speak, and take its place in the more public arena of civilized Chinese discourse." Nevertheless, even though Gimello, to a greater degree than Wilson, acknowledges that the use of such biographical literatures by non-Confucians ultimately had some effect on Confucian elite literary culture itself, he views

67. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, p. 11.

this effect in teleological terms, as the outcome of “unflagging . . . critic[ism]” on the part of Buddhism, a criticism that ultimately was able to stage a successful assault on Confucianism, which Gimello seems to view as relatively static and impregnable.⁶⁸

In Wilson’s assessment, the genealogical genre was used as a way to demarcate the boundaries of “orthodox” Confucian culture, to render it impregnable from the outside, from those who were, literally, left out of its project. Gimello, on the other hand, turns this assessment on its head by arguing that the genealogical genre, when deployed by Buddhist outsiders, was one means by which those outsiders staged an assault on dominant Confucian culture and, in some ways, managed to infiltrate and affect it. Most important, it allowed them to become “an integral part of the public order of concept, value, and action that China’s intellectuals and men of letters then called *Wen* and *Tao*, ‘Culture and the Way.’”⁶⁹

Clearly, Wilson and particularly Gimello are bordering on territory that overlaps significantly with the factors at play in Zhao’s *Genealogy*. Zhao’s text can justifiably be positioned within the genre of genealogical biographies of Confucian scholars so well known in seventeenth-century China. Even if we use a definition of the genre far less flexible than Wilson’s, Zhao was clearly composing a genealogy. And, as Gimello demonstrates, even communities defined by the Confucian elite as standing beyond the boundaries of that elite adopted the genre for their own purposes. What makes Zhao’s *Genealogy* unique, however, is the fact that it does not deal with yet another Confucian school. Rather, it aims to establish a new “school” of learning and include it within the known classical tradition in China.

Unlike Gimello’s Buddhists, Zhao’s Muslims are not sly infiltrators of Confucian culture. Rather, Zhao’s *Genealogy* concerns itself with Muslim scholars engaged in the study of primarily Muslim

68. In Gimello’s own words: “This amounts, I believe, to a kind of a fulfillment of the earlier promise of Chinese Buddhism, a culmination of its gradual process of sinicization, by which Buddhism wove itself into the fabric of Chinese civilization while simultaneously altering the basic pattern of that fabric” (Gimello, “Mārga and Culture,” p. 407).

69. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

texts, the majority of them not written in Chinese and not part of the curriculum of any other school of learning in China. Zhao referred to all the men he chronicled as *duanshi*,⁷⁰ that is, variously, “upright scholars” or “learned men.” Similarly, references to members of the system as *shi* or as *xuezhe* 學者 (scholars) occur frequently in the *Genealogy*. Simply put, these men are “literati,” but not according to any narrowly Confucian understanding of that term. As learned Muslims, they are, in more general terms, “learned men.”

As the case of Qing Chinese Muslim scholars indicates, our understanding of the category *literatus* needs to be reassessed. In this regard I take my lead from Peter Bol’s suggestion that it is more appropriate in the context of late imperial Chinese intellectual history to use “literati” culture rather than “Confucian” culture as a category of inquiry.⁷¹ The term *shi*, or “literatus,” according to Bol, cannot be used exclusively to describe Han Chinese Confucians. In Bol’s words, *shi*

was a concept used to think about the sociopolitical order; at the same time, it referred to an element in that society. *Shi* as a concept was a socially constructed idea that those who called themselves *shi* held. The transformation of the *shi* thus can analytically be separated into changes in the way *shi* conceived of being *shi* and shifts in the social makeup of the men who called themselves *shi*. As a concept, being a *shi* meant possessing qualities thought appropriate to membership in the sociopolitical elite.⁷²

Although the Han Chinese Confucian intellectual sphere viewed the term *shi* as applicable only to its own scholars, teachers, and thinkers, Bol’s argument reminds us that there is no need for historians to share the Confucian elite’s limited understanding of the term. Clearly, Chinese Muslim intellectuals did not share it.

Zhao’s text has the same primary subject matter as genealogies produced by his Confucian contemporaries: the lineage and his-

70. Zhao, “*Jingxue xi chuan zongpu xu*,” in *JXCP*, p. 5.

71. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*.” For more on the specific issue of defining *literatus* as a category that is not exclusive to, or even dominated by, “Confucian” norms, see *ibid.*, pp. 290–91. Bol also takes up this question in “Seeking Common Ground.”

72. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*,” p. 32. Wade-Giles romanizations changed to pinyin.

tory of literary culture—that is, the culture of the literati, or *shi*. Thus Zhao's decision to write his work through the forms of a specific and well-known genre is precisely what makes it a powerful statement on Chinese Muslim scholars' self-perception. It gives a clear indication of the way in which they understood themselves vis-à-vis the Chinese intellectual and literary arena and how they envisioned this culture as a whole. The central dissimilarity between Zhao's project and those of Confucian genealogists revolves around the two communities' different understandings of what could legitimately be categorized as *shi*. The fact that the genealogical genre had in the past been used by the Confucian elite as a device to exclude not just non-Confucians but even Confucians considered outside its mainstream makes Zhao's decision to use it all the more interesting. In an ostensible effort to purify tradition, genealogical texts in fact aimed to purge all those who stood dangerously close to the tradition's periphery. Indeed, Wilson has identified this subtle but definite exclusionary element as the primary characteristic of genealogical discourse: "This capacity to exclude without explicitly doing so is central to the ideological character of genealogical discourse, for exclusions are never innocent. They implicitly or explicitly delegitimize anything that lies on the outside."⁷³

Muslim Chinese scholars, however, did not think that the term *jingxue*, classical learning, was reserved exclusively for Confucian classical learning and saw fit to describe their own scholarly project by this term. As we shall see, this was but one of a number of concepts common to Chinese literati culture Chinese Muslim scholars made free use of.



Zhao's *Genealogy* in its content and form, as well as by its very existence, suggests that Chinese Muslim intellectuals of the late imperial period understood themselves and their work through the values and the social categories of the broader society of which they were a part. In this chapter, we have seen the ways in which Chi-

73. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, p. II.

nese Muslim scholars understood themselves in terms that added up to the category “literati”—one of the most esteemed categories of their society. This self-interpretation as literati should not be understood as an effort by Chinese Muslims to appear Confucian; rather, it is a reflection of the fact that they saw themselves as in some sense fully Chinese. Again, the model of “sinicization” does not need so much to be reworked as to be dispensed with, since it fails utterly to accommodate such nuance and fluidity.

Chinese Muslim scholars similarly viewed the concept of “schools” as one that could easily expand to encompass their own educational traditions and institutions. As Elman has observed, even within Confucian culture the precise meaning of the term “school” is a difficult to pin down with any precision. Elman points out that in the Qing, particularly, “in some cases, a school was little more than a vague category whose members shared a textual tradition, geographic proximity, personal association, philosophical agreement, stylistic similarities, or combinations of these.”⁷⁴ The Muslim Chinese educational system, as we have seen from Zhao’s *Genealogy*, clearly contains each of the elements listed by Elman. It overlaps, too, with Nathan Sivin’s similarly broad definition, by which, as Elman cites it, a school is defined “as the ‘special theories or techniques of a master, passed down through generations of disciples by personal teaching.’”⁷⁵ Again, the Muslim Chinese educational system sits squarely within the parameters of such a definition. As Elman observes of Sivin’s definition, “the act of passing on the texts through personal teachings was key.”⁷⁶ Zhao’s text is interested primarily in documenting exactly this sort of personal contact between teacher and student, with special attention to the texts favored by each teacher.

The Muslim Chinese educational network participated in many of the features of Confucian literary elite culture. It was organized into what, even by a far more rigid and codified definition than Elman’s or Sivin’s, could clearly be called a “school,” and it

74. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, p. 4.

75. *Ibid.*, citing Sivin.

76. *Ibid.*

documented—and thereby propagated—itsself through use of the genealogical genre of literature championed by the Confucian elite.

The fact that Muslim Chinese deployed genealogical discourse to describe themselves and their history is, on one level, not surprising. As Wilson has observed, this discourse so prevalent was by the Ming as to have become “naturalized”: “It is difficult to determine precisely when this genealogical discourse emerged in Confucian discussions of their tradition. It was so pervasive in Confucian writings, particularly by the Ming, that it was virtually invisible to those who spoke in this idiom. Genealogy was ‘naturalized’ to the point that Ming Confucians were barely able to speak outside it and or without its idioms.”⁷⁷ Part and parcel of this naturalization was an expansion of the genre, not of the sort that Wilson describes but here of a sort that made the genre accessible to *all* learned Chinese, not just Confucians. Just as Bol sees in *shi* a category applicable not just to the Confucian elite, Zhao’s text provides illustration of the fact that genealogical literature was useful to schools outside of mainstream Confucian tradition.

Elman’s suggestion of a nuanced understanding of what entities might fall under the rubric “school,” Wilson’s expansion of the category of genealogical discourse to include many different sorts of materials, and Bol’s use of the term *literatus* in a fashion that transcends specifically Confucian culture—all are important interpretive strategies for considering the Chinese Muslim intellectual elite. Zhao’s *Genealogy* both corroborates such expanded definitions and urges us to question further our assumptions about the supposedly well-circumscribed intellectual categories in the Ming and Qing. For Zhao’s text simultaneously fits perfectly into these categories and defies them. It provides us with a textbook example of the genealogical genre of literature so popular with the Confucian elite, yet it does not deal with Confucianism; it describes what clearly can be called a school of thought, but one that would never be acknowledged as legitimate by the Confucian elite; it is written by a “literatus” about “literati” (categories thought to be monopolies of the Confucian elite), yet its Muslim author feels no need to

77. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, p. 11.

explain why the term *shi* can be freely borrowed by his own intellectual community.

The Chinese Muslim scholarly network shows that the categories *shi* and *genealogy* were flexible and available to non-Confucians and Confucians alike. Similarly, Chinese Muslim authors came to understand themselves as members of a school. Their literary works, and the specifically communal circumstances under which they were produced, were vital components of this self-definition.

THREE

The Han Kitab Authors and the Chinese Islamic School

In 1877 the Archimandrite Palladii (Palladius, 1817–78), the head of the Russian ecclesiastical mission in Beijing, completed a short bibliographical study of Chinese Islamic literature available in his time. Palladii spent most of his life in China studying Chinese culture and history, particularly Buddhism and Buddhist texts (he is said to have read the entire Chinese Buddhist canon). He was the first Christian missionary, and the first Westerner, to read the *Han Kitab* literature systematically and the first to argue that Muslims—like Christians—had entered China to proselytize and that Chinese Muslim communities originated in conversion efforts.¹ This view was long held by missionary and Western observers of the *Han Kitab*.² Palladii wrote several lengthy works on Buddhism and three on Chinese Muslims. His comprehensive *Chinese Literature of the Muslims* was published posthumously in 1887.³ In the introduction,

1. For a translation of the introduction to this book, including Palladii's accounts of the authors, see Panskaya and Leslie, *Introduction to Palladii's Chinese Literature of Muslims*, p. 21.

2. For a detailed bibliography containing almost all nineteenth- and early twentieth-century missionary publications on Chinese Muslims, see Israeli, *Islam in China*.

3. Palladii's first work, *On the Muslims in China*, which was twenty-four pages long, was published in 1866. His second work, a thirty-nine-page article published in 1877 that summarizes Liu Zhi's biography of the Prophet Muhammad, is entitled *The Chinese Literature of the Muslims: An Exposition of a Muslim Work in Chinese Entitled "Yu-lan Chih-sheng shih-lu"* (i.e., *The Story of the Life of the Most Holy*

he provided brief accounts of the Chinese Muslim authors whose works he listed. He pointed out that a “renaissance” of Chinese Muslim literature had begun in the seventeenth century, adding that he found it peculiar that there seemed to be no evidence of Islamic works in Chinese from earlier periods.⁴ It was Palladii’s view that Chinese Muslims had begun writing in order to expand their coreligionists’ knowledge of Islam and to proselytize Islam to the Chinese, particularly in response to the recent missionary activities of the Jesuits.

The establishment of the Manchu dynasty [in 1644] in the Middle Kingdom is regarded as a period of renaissance for the literature of Chinese Muslims. Until then the Muslims in China had produced no original scholarly works, except for a few translated monographs dealing with astrology [he intends “astronomy”]⁵ and medicine. From the mid XVIIth century, however, they laid the foundation for a literature of their own in the language of the country they inhabited. In writing these works, they had in mind two things: firstly, the elucidation for their fellow Muslims of the tenets and legends of Islam; and secondly, the defense of their religion, against the attacks and ridicule by the Chinese, insisting on its superiority over the religious teachings that existed in China at the time. It is remarkable that the appearance of these works in the Middle Kingdom coincided with the first written essays in the Chinese language by Catholic missionaries. The one and the other, and for the same reasons, exploited Confucianism, the dominant school in the country.⁶

According to Palladii, then, Chinese Islamic literature was in essence a form of propaganda, and the Chinese Muslim authors were analogous to Jesuit missionaries.⁷ Chinese Islamic literature was

One Read by Those High Above) Compiled by a Chinese Muslim Liu Chieh-lien. This work was later included in Palladii’s bibliography. For more bibliographical detail on Palladii’s works, see Panskaya and Leslie, *Introduction to Palladii’s Chinese Literature of Muslims*, pp. 38–39.

4. Panskaya and Leslie, *Introduction to Palladii’s Chinese Literature of Muslims*, p. 67.

5. Panskaya and Leslie’s emendation; see *ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Palladii was not the only Russian with such views. His book was a response to another paper on Chinese Muslims, written by Vassilij Pavlovich Vasil’ev (for a translation, see Vasil’ev, “Islam in China”). Vasil’ev argued that the Muslims in China were convinced that they were going to convert China to Islam just as the Buddhists did before them. Palladii argued that they presented a threat to Christi-

not something he considered “Chinese,” and its exploitative uses and abuses of Confucianism (a “real” Chinese cultural product) were to be mistrusted.

Not all missionaries were hostile to Islam, but all shared Palladii’s view that it was fundamentally foreign. The Protestant Isaac Mason (fl. early twentieth century) devoted most of his life to missionary activity among the Chinese Muslims and published numerous short articles on them in journals dedicated to missionary work among Muslims around the world. Among his articles was a bibliography of the *Han Kitab* and other Chinese Muslim literatures. Mason listed 214 works, dating from the seventeenth century to the 1920s.⁸ Mason, like Palladii, dated the rise of Chinese Muslim literature to the seventeenth century. He, too, found this strange, given that Muslims had been living in China for several centuries. His bland explanation for this long period of silence was that Chinese Muslims had been “preparing” themselves in some oblique way for scholarship and now wrote perhaps in response to some “difficulty”: “[In the seventeenth century] some of the writers took up their tasks after much preparations and with a sense of duty which enabled them to surmount many difficulties.”⁹

It is remarkable that both Palladii and Mason focused on what they presumed to be the *intention* of the *Han Kitab* scholars—a desire to convert the Chinese or to write an Islamic apologia. In one sense, this view is quite understandable, since this is what Christian missionaries themselves were doing in China; the representatives of a competing monotheistic religion could only be in China for the same reason. However, the focus on Muslim intentions led these

anity. In this respect Palladii and Vasil’ev were not alone: all Western literature on Chinese Muslims, from the Jesuits to the 1930s, was motivated by Christian concerns of different sorts.

8. Most of the texts listed in Mason’s bibliography date from the twentieth century. The journals in question, *Moslem World*, *Chinese Repository*, *Chinese Recorder*, and especially the *Friends of Moslems*, published frequent reports about Chinese Muslims and about missionary work among them. Of all writers, Isaac Mason stands out as the most prolific. Mason studied the various Chinese translations of the Qur’an and translated the biography of Muhammad by Liu Zhi (see below).

9. Mason, “Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature,” p. 174.

early observers to overlook the historical circumstances surrounding the production of this literature and to assume a long “incubation” period during which (an essentialized) “dormant Islam” had been waiting for the right opportunity, or the trigger, to appear in the form of the *Han Kitab* books.

My purpose here is not to counter missionary evaluations of Islamic literature. I will, however, use these missionary observations as point of departure and shift the focus of study from the search for intentions to a presentation of the *Han Kitab* scholars as a Chinese school of scholarship emerging out a scholarly network.

The productivity of the authors of the *Han Kitab* peaked roughly between 1630 and 1730. Two particular characteristics of these authors and scholars are striking. First, the vast majority were products of and participants in the educational network. Second, and in relation to the first, is the marked ways in which the texts of the *Han Kitab* were not the output of an individual and isolated writing process. Instead, these works were the result of conscious and intensive cooperation and correspondence among a large group of Chinese Muslim literati. For the most part, the members of this group were connected to one another most immediately through the educational system and its network; others were bound together by kinship or communal ties of financial and intellectual patronage. The group consisted of authors, translators, editors, and publishers, as well as contributors of prefaces, greetings, and postscripts, not to mention those who supplied financial assistance. This collective, or interactive, process of literary production was informed by, and constitutive of, the Chinese Muslim educational network’s constituency.

The educational network produced scholars, often in genealogical chains, and it devoted itself to the simultaneous transmission and expansion of a body of knowledge that came *through* this transmission and expansion to be not simply Muslim but distinctly Chinese Muslim. So, too, the constituency of the network understood itself as distinctly Chinese *and* distinctly Muslim—as occupying the overlapping shared space of those two categories.

In order to simplify the presentation of the myriad figures of this network and the works to which they were connected, I have

broken them down into three groups. The first consists of translators, of whom two are discussed at length. The second group is made up of authors of original works. Of these, three—the most prominent—are presented in detail. The third is made up of patrons, editors, and publishers—that is, those who contributed to the literary production of Chinese Islamic knowledge in a less direct, but no less important, way. Of these, again three are treated in full. Within each group, individuals are presented in chronological order.

The Rise of the Chinese Islamic School

Beginning in the 1630s, Chinese Muslim scholars embarked on what was to be roughly 100 years of strikingly intense and interactive literary activity. The period between the 1630s and the 1730s saw an unprecedented outburst of Chinese Muslim scholarship. Intellectuals translated Arabic and Persian texts into Chinese, compiled dictionaries, wrote Persian and Arabic grammars and treatises on the origins of Arabic letters, produced commentaries on important Islamic texts, and authored original philosophical works and studies of key concepts in the Qur'an and *hadith*. The period was also characterized by the consolidation and dissemination of such written knowledge, a phase that stretched up to 1780s. Manuscripts were produced in print form, and already printed texts were republished with the addition of commentaries and prefaces, greetings, and postscripts.

Most significant, Chinese Muslim scholarship of the period began to reflect in important ways the growing sense of its producers that they were members of a distinct and distinguished Chinese intellectual tradition. Thus, in addition to the publication and republication of already existing texts, these scholars also began to write about themselves—their scholarship, their institutions of learning, and their educational curriculum. Included in such self-reflective literatures were geographical treatises about the Muslim world, “histories” of the Muslims in China, and Zhao Can’s *Genealogy*—which not only provides a wealth of information about specific individuals and their interrelationships but also outlines the consolidation of a specifically Chinese Muslim communal intellectual identity.

Out of the Chinese Muslim educational system emerged a network of scholars that understood itself, and that should be understood as, a *school* of scholarship. I intend this term in the sense that it has been deployed by other scholars of education or scholarship in China. Forming a school of scholarship was the way in which Chinese Muslim scholars expressed and constructed Muslim identity in general. The process was twofold, in that it was directed both at the community that it sought to represent (by “teaching” Chinese Muslims who they were; what it meant to be Muslim and Chinese) *and* to the broader Chinese society, its educated elite in particular, in which they found themselves and of which they were a part. That is, it was both prescriptive and descriptive. The consummate expression of this process is found in the body of texts chosen for translation or created by Muslim scholars.

The emergence of something that can be termed a Chinese Muslim “school” accompanied the new scholarly perception that Islam, as a philosophical and scientific (mostly astronomy and medicine) body of knowledge, was an important object of study. Thus, early Qing Chinese Muslim scholars understood their activities as a form of intellectual specialization. They saw themselves as Chinese literati who had as their object of study a specific “Dao”—Islam. The study of Islam was certainly not the only scholarly activity with which these scholars engaged, but it was the primary one. More important, it was the one that bounded and defined them. Just as other schools of the period were defined by their methodology or literary genre or object of study, so, too, was the Chinese Muslim school defined by the subject matter that was its focus: the philosophy, ethics, and science of Islam. I am not, of course, suggesting that the Chinese Muslim school existed in any formal or externally affirmed way—it was not recognized by Confucian elites, for example, as one of the numerous schools of the period that fit under the umbrella of Confucian literati culture, even though for Chinese Muslim scholars Islamic study could fit there quite easily. This self-perception was grounded in a broad intellectual sphere, one that, to the *Han Kitab* scholars, was not an exclusively Confucian one.

The production of the *Han Kitab* texts was the result of combined and often coordinated effort on the part of Chinese Muslim

scholars. That is, this is not a collection of randomly produced texts. Behind the *Han Kitab* corpus stands a complex network of scholars who interacted intensely in a variety of ways. In short, behind it stands a school. Authors knew one another and read and commented on the work of other members of the school. Moreover, certain authors had master-disciple relationships, shared the same classroom, or were related to each other. Just like other Chinese intellectuals, *Han Kitab* authors spoke not as individuals but as members of an established and recognizable intellectual community. Even the small number of *Han Kitab* authors who were officials in the Chinese administration maintained contacts with the Chinese Islamic scholarly community. These scholar-officials visited the Muslim educational centers or wrote commentaries on works produced by other *Han Kitab* authors.

Another sign that these scholars formed a school is the growing production and use of bibliographies during the eighteenth century, particularly in Jiangnan. Bibliographies played an important role in the coalescence of and proliferation of schools. This was also the case with the Chinese Muslim scholarly community and its apparatus. I discuss one eighteenth-century Chinese Muslim bibliography at some length below; for present purposes what is significant is that in the 1700s bibliographies and catalogues were produced in numbers greater than ever before in Chinese history and were closely connected to an extensive book-based culture. Moreover, scholars of the period stressed the importance of bibliography both as a field of study and as a tool in the service of other fields of research.¹⁰

Chinese Muslim scholars, like their non-Muslim Confucian counterparts, were active producers of bibliographies, catalogues, genealogies, anthologies, and the like. The composition of a specifically Chinese Muslim scholarly genealogy (1677) and of a bibliography some hundred years later (1780) marked important steps in the gradual consolidation of the Chinese Muslim intellectual community, first into an educational network and then into a school—complete with its own lineage, history, and self-perception. Obviously, what I term the Chinese Muslim educational network

10. See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 160–63.

and the Chinese Islamic school are overlapping entities. The first is primarily physical, whereas the second is conceptual, is predicated on the existence of the first, and has connotations of a developing ideological or cultural self-consciousness on the part of participants.

Schools as a framework for inquiry and a prism for Qing intellectual history are highly applicable in the case of the *Han Kitab* scholars. Elman has pointed some of the complexities of this framework for inquiry, primary among them the fact that it is, in many instances, far more difficult to distinguish different schools than many scholars recognize. As he writes of the Qing:

Problems arise in any effort to make sense out of the many schools of learning. . . . Traditional notions of a *p'ai* (faction), *chia* (school), or *chia-hsueh* are less precise than traditional scholars and modern sinologists tend to assume. In some cases, a school was little more than a vague category whose members shared a textual tradition, geographical proximity, personal association, philosophic agreement, stylistic similarities, or combinations of these. In many cases, a "school" would be defined merely to legitimate the organizations that prepared its genealogy or provided rationalization for the focus of scholarly activities peculiar to a region.¹¹

Fortunately for my argument, and for fairly obvious reasons, clarification is easier in the case of the Chinese Muslims, where the problem (in terms of broader Chinese historiography) is not so much distinguishing different schools as it is acknowledging the existence of one in the first place. It also easy to separate different "schools" in the Chinese Muslim case, for the obvious reason that the school is not just one Chinese school among many but an *Islamic* one. Just as Elman points out that the "schools approach" as a mode of inquiry finds itself on "firmer ground" when referring to "specific geographical areas during particular periods of time" (presumably because a geographic or chronological marker is more easily and clearly delineated than a content-based definition), I would suggest that the introduction of the term "Muslim" into the discussion similarly serves as a fairly radical and clear-cut definitional guide.¹² (This is not, however, *always* the case, for Muslim scholars did not at all times define themselves through Islamic categories.)

11. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, p. 2.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

Finding clear differences, however, is not the only problem. We do well to heed the warning of Virginia Mayer-Chan, who rightly observes that “another serious problem with the concept of ‘schools’ is its tendency to obscure similarities which cut across boundaries.”¹³

The Chinese Muslim intellectual community appears to be at risk of falling into both of these interpretive traps. On one hand, its marked similarity to various dominant, universally recognized schools is overlooked, presumably because “Islam” is assumed to be so dramatically alien to the broader Chinese cultural context that resemblances are simply ignored. Thus, for instance, its deployment of literary genres championed by the general Chinese literary elite has gone unnoticed. On the other hand, however, the Chinese Muslim intellectual community has not been viewed as different enough (or, put another way, important enough in its difference) to be seen as constituting a distinct school of its own. Thus, Chinese Muslim intellectuals have either been understood as having been subsumed by dominant Han intellectual society and its schools (through participation in the examination system, for example) or been overlooked altogether, viewed as so far outside the mainstream of eighteenth-century Chinese intellectual trends as not to warrant investigation.

Chinese Muslim scholarship, however, was not produced in a vacuum. Specific works and their authors can be properly understood only against the backdrop both of broader Chinese intellectual trends *and* within the context of their intellectual networks, educational system, lineage, and pedagogy—that is, within the context of their school. Indeed, Chinese Muslim scholarship is arguably predicated on the existence of such networks. As Randall Collins contends in *The Sociology of Philosophies*, “[a significant] pattern of creativity is intergenerational networks, chains of eminent teachers and pupils. . . . Creativity is not random among individuals; it builds up in intergenerational chains.”¹⁴ Chinese Muslim scholarship, however, has been viewed as just that—random, if not aberrant. Authors and their texts are understood either as chance,

13. Mayer-Chan, “Historical Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China,” pp. 36–39.

14. Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, pp. 5–6.

isolated cases or as the rare example of “successful” assimilation into dominant, non-Muslim intellectual structures.¹⁵

Elman observes that in the Qing, “school divisions were taken for granted as evidence of the filiation of scholars, who through personal or geographical association, philosophic or literary agreement, or master-disciple relations could be classed as distinct ‘schools of learning’ (*chia-hsueh*.”¹⁶ He is correct to alert us to this somewhat misleading assumption, for the case of the Chinese Muslim educational network suggests that the reverse is the case—that is, such factors as geographical association, master-disciple relations, and the like should themselves be taken as evidence of the existence of something perhaps best termed a “school.” Rather than seeing a division into schools as evidence for such factors, we should understand these factors as the very basis for school divisions themselves.

The case of the Chinese Muslim school is, on one hand, characteristic of other schools of the period. The shared body of literature used across a wide area, the master-disciple relations between various members, kin relations between others, their geographic interconnectedness, and the like are typical of schools in the early to mid-Qing. On the other hand, however, the Chinese Muslim school is distinctive in the total clarity of its ideological or philosophic basis for the filiation of scholars. The factor (however protean and difficult to define in purely intellectual terms) that ties the school’s members together is not simply philosophic or literary agreement but the amorphous notion of “Islam.”

In the Chinese context, this denotes not only “faith” or “religion” but also a specific space to which Muslims in China looked as a place of origin and a specific history from which they derived their identity. Islam was the starting point in the genealogical time/space continuum created by family and pedagogic genealogies. The way in which Islam is manifest in, or is a contributing factor to the formation of, this school is therefore not strictly religious, in the narrowest sense of that term. Instead, Islam was itself con-

15. In addition to Christian missionary evaluations of *Han Kitab* works, see also Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*; and Israeli, *Muslims in China*.

16. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, p. 2.

stitutive of the sort of shared *Weltanschauung* to which Elman gestures.

Chinese Muslim scholars were active in a wide array of fields—philology, bibliography, geography, translation, philosophy—that were useful tools for exploring specifically Islamic knowledge, such as ritual and law. They were not, however, in any sense distinctively Muslim. In fact, such fields were most characteristic of the dominant elite literati society at the time. Chinese Muslim scholars' shared interest, the interest that brought them together as a school, was thus based on a simultaneous "scholarliness" of a distinctly Chinese sort and "Muslimness," again of a distinctly Chinese sort—one that placed its emphasis on scholarship. The Chinese Muslim school thus, peculiarly, has as its starting point a filiation in Islam but insists that Islam be viewed through the lenses of dominant Chinese cultural categories.

The ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars coalesced into a school are best traced through a prosopography of the producers of Chinese Islamic scholarship—the authors of the texts of the *Han Kitab*. Their embeddedness in a complex matrix of kinship, pedagogy, patronage, and geography, in combination with the interrelatedness of their scholarly output and their cultural setting, show with greater immediacy how the Chinese Islamic school grew out of its educational system.

Providing Access to Foreign Knowledge: Translators and Translations

As we have seen, translation from Arabic and Persian was one of the most important activities of the authors of the *Han Kitab*. Almost all the authors discussed here engaged in translation. Some translated short passages of the Qur'an or of other texts in order to incorporate them into their own works; others, particularly in earlier years, translated entire books, mostly Sufi texts in circulation throughout the educational network.

In two of his important multivolume works on Islamic ritual and philosophy, Liu Zhi provided long lists of books and sources in Arabic and Persian. Together there are almost seventy items on

the two lists.¹⁷ By the seventeenth century, a considerable number of books in Persian and Arabic were available in China, some of which had been translated into Chinese by Chinese Muslim scholars.¹⁸ The importance of translating grew during this period as the rapid expansion of the Chinese Muslim educational network created a greater demand for accessible versions of these texts.

This demand was the result, it is safe to assume, of two seemingly contradictory processes. Although fewer Chinese Muslims could read, let alone write, Arabic or Persian, more were entering the newly created education system. The fact that instruction in Chinese Muslim schools was now carried out in Chinese signaled the increasingly indigenized nature of the educational system, just as the translation of these texts into Chinese points to their increasing incorporation into a specifically Chinese version of Islamic knowledge. We should also not exclude the possibility that these texts, like as other *Han Kitab* texts, were intended for non-Muslim readers.

As we have seen, teachers and students in the network emphasized learning and using Arabic and Persian. One of the main scholarly qualities deemed important by Zhao Can was the ability to read and communicate in these Islamic languages.¹⁹ During its formation, the educational system was based solely on texts composed in foreign languages, and it is clear that access to them was vital. Later, even after these texts had been translated into Chinese, knowledge of their original languages remained an attribute of the well-educated scholar. The number of direct participants in the educational network and the greater number of the members of its constituency suggest that there was a sizable audience for Chinese translations of Islamic texts. Knowing that the results of their labor were in demand, translators could ask for financial support while

17. Attempts to recover the original titles of the Persian and Arabic books mentioned began in the nineteenth century with Archimandrite Palladii. He was followed by a long series of scholars and travelers who worked on Chinese Islam. For more on this issue, see Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih," pp. 78–81.

18. See Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, pp. 1261–66, for a list of twenty-five that may have been translated.

19. See, e.g., his story about Feng Tongyu, discussed in Chapter 2 of this book, pp. 000–00.

working. Translations were also an important tool in reinforcing the internal cohesion of the educational system, as well as curricular standardization, since their availability meant that all the members of the system used one recognized and legitimate version of each text. Such standardization was necessary not only for “ideological” reasons but also for the simple reason that it facilitated communication among scholars from different areas, a point made clear through an examination of specific translators.²⁰

One of the first translators involved in the rise of the *Han Kitab* was Zhang Junshi 長君時 (ca. 1584–1661), who also appears under his style name, Zhang Zhong 張中, and is known among Chinese Muslims as Hanshan sou 寒山叟 (Elder of Hanshan). Zhang was a native of Suzhou and studied in Nanjing in the school of Zhang Shaoshan, who had migrated from Xi'an. Zhang Junshi is listed in Zhao Can's *Genealogy* as one of Zhang Shaoshan's disciples; next to his name and place of origin, Zhao noted that he “translated the *Guizhen zongyi* and other books” 張君時蘇州府人氏譯歸真總義等書 (*JXCP*, p. 41). Among Zhang's classmates in Nanjing we find four figures who would later become prominent within the educational network: Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling, founders of Jining school in Shandong, Ma Junshi of Nanjing (himself an author), and Yuan Shengzhi, founder of the Yuan school in Nanjing.

In 1638, while studying in Nanjing, Zhang met an Indian Muslim (Sufi) scholar, who appears in the *Genealogy* as Ashike 阿世喀 and was already known among other Chinese Muslim students as a well-read person. Zhang wrote a detailed description of his relationship with the Indian teacher, commenting even on his “strange” foreign physical appearance: “big nose, big eyes, high forehead, long beard—his facial and general appearance were very strange, and all the people said that he was a Buddhist monk” 觀其儀表隆准眼高額長髯雄奇魁偉人僉曰此胡僧也. He continues, “Only Master Zhang Shaoshan of Lintong recognized him and said: ‘This is a scholar

20. An example of standardization is the case of the *Mirsad al-'ibad* (see below). Zhao's *Genealogy* contains several references to this book by different titles. Apparently different teachers (such as Ma Minglong, who produced his own translation of the book under a different title [*JXCP*, p. 44]) had their own translations of this text. After its translation by Wu Zixian, however, all references in later Chinese Islamic texts use the title he gave the book.

who masters the Dao'” 獨臨潼少山張老師識之曰此有道之士。As Zhang studied with this man, he slowly began to realize that the Indian scholar was a clever man who knew a great deal.²¹

Zhang studied with Ashike for three years, until his return to India.²² Zhang subsequently produced in Chinese a number of books that he claimed had first been orally transmitted (*koushou* 口授) to him by Ashike in Arabic and Persian. The first was the *Guizhen zongyi* 歸真總義 (General principles of the return).²³ This treatise on the third principle of Islam was based on an original Arabic work, the transliteration of which is given in Chinese as *yimani muzhimole* 以麻尼穆直默勒. The work has been identified by Donald Leslie as the *Imani majmu'*, a Sufi text in wide circulation in the Persian-speaking Islamic world during the fourteenth century.²⁴

Sha Zhenzong 沙振宗 (fl. 1640s–50s), Zhang's disciple and associate, who assisted in translating the book and also contributed a postscript, left an account of its translation and production. According to Sha, Zhang worked “relentlessly for three years, without caring about his sources of income, so that he could transmit this important book taught to him by that Indian teacher.” Sha reminded the reader that thanks to Zhang, “scholars of the Eastern Land [China] now have access to this important work.”²⁵

Zhang's second book, the *Sipian yaodao* 四篇要道 (Essential of the Four Chapters), is a translation of a Persian text entitled *Chahr fassl* (Four chapters). Zhang translated and published this book in 1653 during a prolonged visit to Yangzhou. Upon arriving in Yangzhou, he met two friends, Ma Zhonglong 馬中龍 and Li Zhihua

21. See Zhang Zhong (Zhang Junshi), “Yindu Yimanijie lu” 印度以麻呢解緣 (Record of the *Guizhen zongyi*), in Zhang Junshi, *Guizhen zongyi* 歸真總義, 1a–2a.

22. For Zhang's biography, see HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 38–39; and Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, pp. 1368–69, 1401.

23. The terms *guizhen* 歸真 and *guiyi* 歸一 are translations of the term *ma'ād*, or “return to God,” the third principle of Islam. For a discussion of this term, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, p. 23.

24. For identification of the text, see Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 25. For a thoughtful discussion of translating Sufi texts into Chinese, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, pp. 31–34.

25. Sha Zhenzong 沙振崇, “*Guizhen zongyi* houba” 歸真總義後跋 (Postface to the *Guizhen zongyi*), in Zhang Junshi, *Guizhen zongyi*, 67b–68a. For a punctuated version, see HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 319–320.

李之華, recent converts to Islam who did not understand Arabic or Persian. Wanting them to have access to the *Chahr fassl*, “which was not in the language of China” 非中國之語, Zhang translated the book for them.²⁶ In both cases, as with other works Zhang translated, he was in fact translating not just from one language to another but also from one form (orality) to another (the written word). Zhang’s Indian interlocutor, Ashike, read the original works aloud to him, providing commentary on the text as he did, and Zhang later (ostensibly from memory) committed them to paper in a Chinese version.²⁷ In addition to his numerous translations, Zhang was also the author of an original work, the *Kelimo* 克里默, which is a short explication of the meaning of *kalām*, or Islamic “theology.” In this work, too, Zhang operated as a translator, citing key terms in Arabic (in transliterated form) and then translating and explaining them.²⁸

Immediately on their publication in the 1640s, Zhang’s works were widely circulated throughout the Chinese Muslim educational system and were cited by later authors. They have since remained central works within the *Han Kitab*. Zhang’s works and Zhang himself as scholar illustrate one of the central dynamics of the Chinese educational system: it produced scholars who in turn produced scholarship and was dedicated to a simultaneous transmission and expansion of a body of knowledge that came through transmission and expansion to be not simply Muslim but distinctly Chinese Muslim. This “Chinese Muslim-ness” came to be the unifying principle, or philosophic outlook, that ultimately bound together all Chinese Muslim scholars as a school.

The most important and intriguing translator of the period flourished three decades later. This was Wu Xizian 伍子先 (ca. 1598–1678), who also appears under his style name, Wu Zunqie 伍遵契, of

26. Zhang Zhong, “Xu *Sipian yaodao yijie*” 敘四篇要道譯解 (Introduction to the translation of the *Four Chapters*), *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 315. See also the story in Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, p. 1370.

27. The term *koushou* (verbal instruction or dictation) is used in both Zhang’s and Sha’s texts to describe the way in which the translations were undertaken.

28. For the complete text, see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 213–22; for a short introduction, see *ibid.*, pp. 210–12.

Nanjing, the translator of two major Persian Sufi works.²⁹ Wu, a member of the important Wu lineage of Nanjing, was a fairly successful examination candidate and earned the initial degree of *xiucai* 秀才 (licentiate). Shortly after the Qing conquest in 1644, which apparently put an end to his career as an examination candidate, he embarked on his second career as an Islamic scholar. Wu first studied with Chang Yunhua and Li Yanling in Jining, where he spent several years (*JXCP*, p. 55). He then returned to Nanjing and studied with Ma Jinyi (*JXCP*, p. 97). All three teachers, along with Wu himself, are listed in Zhao's *Genealogy*.

Sometime around 1660 Wu began working on his translation of a book that greatly influenced the writings of later Chinese Muslim writers. Known in the educational system as *Mi'ersa de* 米尔撒德, or by its Chinese title, *Guizhen yaodao* 归真要道 (Fundamentals of the return [to God]), the book had already been in circulation in the system in its original Persian for several decades.³⁰ This was the *Mirsad al-'Ibad min al-mabda ila al-ma'ad* (The path of God's bondsmen from origin to return), a well-known Sufi text in the Islamic world. The *Mirsad* was written in the early thirteenth century by Abu Bakr Najm al-Din Daya Razi, a Sufi master simply known as Daya. Daya was one of the masters of the Central Asian Kobravi (Kubrawiyya) Sufi order, and his book is a massive compendium of Sufi precepts and rituals, all directed toward reaching a state of communion with God (the "return to God" mentioned in its title). To this day the book is among the most influential of Sufi texts.³¹

29. The date of death must be questioned, particularly since there is no mention of Wu in any Chinese Islamic text after 1680.

30. It seems, although I am not certain on this point, that Wu's was the first translation of the *Mirsad* into any language. It was first translated into English less than twenty years ago. The Kobrawiyya Sufi order was founded by Najm al-Din Kobra (born ca. 1145-46 in the city of Khorizm; died in 1221 during the Mongol conquest of the city). The order spread into Central Asia fairly early on and persisted and flourished there until the seventeenth century and later. The order's texts emphasized the visionary experience of those who take the Sufi path and the morphology of man's inner being. See Algar, "Introduction," in idem, *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, pp. 2-4.

31. Ibid., pp. 1-25. The author of the book, Daya, also completed an Arabic version. An Arabic manuscript of the *Mirsad* was found in Gansu by the French mission to China led by Ollone; see Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 28. In

After its initial publication, the *Mirsad* became popular from India to the Middle East. Daya's work provides a systematic and elaborate description of the key concepts of Sufism and Islam as well as a Sufi exegesis of the Qur'an. It also includes important information about the Islamic world of his time and a polemic against the Hellenizing tendencies of Islamic philosophers. The main purpose of the book, however, is to guide the Sufi practitioner through the path to God and back. Hence the title "Daya" (wetnurse) attached to the author, implying that the person who takes the path is like a newborn infant sustained only by maternal milk.³²

Like many other Sufi texts, the *Mirsad* was written in reaction to a disaster. Born in 1177 in the Persian city of Ray, Daya witnessed the sacking of this city by the Mongols and spent thirty-five years of his life fleeing them. The *Mirsad* was written while the author was in hiding. Daya died in Baghdad in 1256, two years before that city was taken by the Mongol armies. He described the circumstances under which he wrote the *Mirsad* in a long introduction to the work, also translated into Chinese by Wu. The book was translated into Chinese shortly after the Manchu invasion of China, but if Wu himself saw a parallel between the two periods of turmoil, he did not mention it in his preface to the translation.

The *Mirsad* was probably the most popular text in the Chinese Muslim educational network and among its constituency. Every subsequent author, translator, and editor made reference to it. Perhaps the best testimony to its centrality is the apocryphal story told by Zhao regarding the "miraculous" circumstances under which it was "discovered" by Feng Bo'an in Yunnan, hidden be-

Persian the word *murshed* (guide) is used mostly in a religious context and usually refers to a Sufi master of the highest rank.

32. See Algar, *The Path of God's Bondmen*, pp. 8, 222: "Just as the infant drinks milk at the breast of its mother or wetnurse, receiving from them the sustenance without which it would perish, so too the infant of spirit drinks the milk of the Path and of the Truth from the nipple of the mother of prophethood or the wetnurse of sainthood, receiving from the prophet or the Shaykh—who stands in place of the prophet—that sustenance without which it would perish." Or in Wu's translation: 即如乳子從母的乳上吃或從乳母的乳上吃漸漸的調養以致無傷此命的乳子也須從聖從生母乳中吃或從道長乳母的乳中吃憑聖教道至道的乳漸漸調理也無傷了(8.3a).

neath a tree as foretold in a dream (see Chapter 2). Zhao mentioned the book frequently in the *Genealogy* as being taught and discussed by a number of teachers, both before and after its translation. Of them, She Yunshan was particularly active in introducing the book into the curriculum. He traveled to several schools, from the Beijing area in the north to the Nanjing area in the south, focusing his teaching on the book, which in his time had not yet been translated into Chinese (*JXCP*, p. 90).³³ It is likely that his efforts were in large part responsible for creating a wide demand for a Chinese version of the *Mirsad*.

Wu, in the translator's introduction, pointed to the need for a Chinese translation as his primary motive in undertaking the work. In the 1672 preface to the book, Wu wrote that after studying and researching Islamic classics for thirty years he wanted to share what he had gained with others: "The Most Sagely [Muhammad] says: 'Whatever one obtains, [one] should share with others'; so I with great happiness decided to give one copy of a Chinese translation of the *Mirsad* to colleagues for public use" 至聖云凡所得者當分於人余於悅心之下欲以米而撒得一集漢譯以公同人.³⁴ Here we see a quintessential expression of the awareness of one scholar of his own intellectual community and its needs. Wu understood knowledge as something to be shared and viewed his job as a scholar to be the transmission and dissemination of knowledge.

In this case, the production of knowledge was again not a solitary venture. The translation of the *Mirsad* took Wu more than fifteen years and was undertaken with the assistance of his brother, who was also a student of Ma Junshi. According to Wu's account in the introduction, his brother would read the book to him from the Persian, while he translated it into Chinese and wrote it down.³⁵ This scene, which reveals that the two brothers differed in their command of both Persian and classical Chinese, illustrates

33. Among other teachers who used the book are Ma Minglong, Chang Yunhua, and Feng Shaochuan.

34. Wu Zixian, "Yi Guizhen yaodao zixu" 譯歸真要道自敘 (Author's preface to the *Essentials of the Return [to God]*), punctuated version in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 326.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 327.

what was possibly a common feature among Chinese Muslim gentry families—one brother seeking success as an examination candidate, while the other attended the local Muslim school.

In addition to his brother, Wu's two sons and two of his colleagues contributed prefaces to the translation. The *Mirsad* in Wu's version was taught until the early twentieth century in Chinese Muslim schools.³⁶ Thus the work, initially a quasi-canonical classic in the Islamic world, passed, through translation, into the quasi-canonical corpus of literature central to the Chinese Muslim educational system, the *Han Kitab*.

An examination of the dates of Islamic translations into Chinese shows that a relatively large number of other translators were active in the latter half of the seventeenth century.³⁷ This burgeoning interest in translation is reflective of several things. The first is the expansion, in sheer number of participants, of the Chinese Muslim educational network. Second is the fact that Chinese-Muslim scholarship in the period, clearly, was becoming less specifically western (that is, accessible only to specialists with advanced knowledge of Persian and Arabic). The educational system by this point included a number of people with at best minimal knowledge of Arabic. This development can be seen in the difference between Zhang Junshi's translation and those of Wu and other later scholars. Whereas Zhang was dependent on a foreign teacher, Wu and others made use only of local, Chinese resources. That all these later translators were either disciples or associates of Chang Yunhua (who placed great emphasis on learning Islamic languages, composed two grammar books, and compiled a Persian-Arabic-Chinese dictionary) may account for their ability to work without the assistance of "informants" such as Ashike.

36. Pang, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu," pp. 1028–29.

37. See Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*. See also Yu Zhengui and Yang Huaizhong, *Zhongguo Yisilan wenxian zhuyi tiyao*.

Original Authors:

Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, and Liu Zhi

The connections to a broader scholarly community that characterized translators is even more marked in the case of the authors of original *Han Kitab* texts. The earliest author to emerge from the Chinese Muslim educational network is best understood by the sobriquet he chose for himself. This is Wang Daiyu 王岱輿, also known as Zhenhui laoren 真回老人 (Elder of Islam).³⁸ A disciple of Ma Junshi, a teacher of the fourth generation of scholars active in the network, Wang was born in Nanjing around 1570 to a family of Muslim astronomers. Wang says, with some apparent pride, that his ancestors had come to China from Arabia (天房)³⁹ during the early Ming period to serve at the court of the Hongwu emperor.⁴⁰ The family settled in Nanjing and apparently held positions in the Bureau of Astronomy for several generations. This is, at least, what Wang tells us about his family. Wang's ancestors, he wrote, "corrected the subtleties of astronomy [and] altered the mistakes in the calendar" 訂天文之精微改曆法之謬誤.⁴¹ According to Wang, the grateful emperor granted the family the right to live in China and exempted them from corvée. Wang explains that his family's privilege came about because of the lack of good astronomers in China.⁴²

Wang, by his account, had no classical education prior to the age of twenty, when he began reading the Confucian classics, history

38. I translate *zhenhui* as "Islam." I suspect that it is a combining form of Qingzhen (Islam) and Huihui (Muslim), which were common at the time. In the same manner, Wang's sobriquet could be also translated as "Elder of the Muslims."

39. As mentioned in the Introduction, the character *fang* 房 is sometimes used instead of the more common 方. In this context, the meaning of 天房 is similar to that of 天方.

40. Several short biographies of Wang Daiyu were published in China, starting in the nineteenth century. All are based on Wang's account in the "Zixu" 自敘, which he attached to his first book, the *Zhengjiao zhenquan* (for the text of the "Zixu," see ZQX, pp. 16–17). For the most recent, see HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 33–35.

41. Wang Daiyu, "Zixu," in ZQX, p. 16.

42. In his words: 帝心欣悅...遂授職欽天賜居此地准免徭役與國始終 (ibid.).

books, and the various authors of the hundred schools (始閱性理史鑒之書旁及百家諸子). He defines all these topics as the learning of the *Ru* (or Confucian scholars—儒者之學).⁴³ Evidently, Wang did not receive a formal education in the classics, nor do we have any indication from him that he was ever an examination candidate. He probably learned to read and write Chinese in the Islamic school at Nanjing. In Zhao's *Genealogy*, Wang appears in the school of Ma Junshi from Nanjing, as the "teacher Daiyu Wang" 岱與王師. Next to his name, Zhao noted: "Author of the *Zhengjiao zhenquan* and other [books], good at instructing the books and classics, writing and translating, [his] wonders are many" 著有正教真詮等書字譯經長於訓勸奇跡頗多 (*JXCP*, p. 52). His teacher, Ma Junshi—himself author of the *Tianfang weizhen yaolue* 天方微真要略 (Comprehensive sketch of the subtleties [hidden things] of Islam)⁴⁴—also wrote of Wang's scholarly prowess. The teacher contributed a foreword to one of Wang's texts—the *Xizhen zhengda* 希真正答 (Correct answer of the Very True), published in Nanjing in 1658—in which Ma described his disciple Wang as someone who was able to explain every question he was asked in a friendly and a kind manner, even when he had to repeat himself (往日岱與王子於是或有問者必正言答之不憚反複明曉之同人爲筆記, 得若干則).⁴⁵

Wang's first and most important book is in two volumes, each divided into twenty sections concerned with different topics related to Islam. The first volume is dedicated to the foundations of Islamic faith, beginning with a discussion of the meaning and nature of God. It is entitled *Zhenyi* 真一 (The True and One), a term he apparently coined.⁴⁶ The second addresses questions of practice and opens with a section explicating the five pillars of Islam.⁴⁷ Wang followed the composition of this book with a number of others, among them the undated *Qingzhen daxue* 清真大學 (The Great

43. Ibid.

44. *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 37. See also the entry on Ma Junshi in Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 78.

45. Ma Junshi (Ma Zhongxin), "Bianyan" 弁言 (Foreword), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 313–14.

46. Wang Daiyu, "Zhenyi" in *ZQX*, pp. 19–23.

47. For a detailed discussion of all terms used by Wang and a translation of his text, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, pp. 43–112.

Learning of Islam), and the *Xizhen zhengda* 希真正答 dated 1658. He also composed another short text, *Shengyu* 剩語 (Addendum), a collection of forty-six dialogues with a Buddhist monk.⁴⁸

At a later stage of his life, Wang left Nanjing and moved to Beijing, where he was supported by a rich Chinese Muslim. Before his death he worked there for several years as a teacher in a Chinese Muslim school in Sanlihe 三里河 (in modern Beijing), where he was buried.⁴⁹

Wang's texts are short and explanatory. Two are constructed dialogically, as sets of questions and answers. In all his works he includes short quotations from *hadith* and the Qur'an, with exegetical commentary. This literary style is a direct reflection of his experiences as a teacher in the classroom. Many of the questions posed in his works are likely the actual questions of students. As his own teacher described him, Wang was very good at explaining concepts to students and at translating from the Arabic and Persian to Chinese. Evidently, his books were based directly on his experiences as teacher and probably intended to be used in the classroom by other teachers. Wang was not attempting systematically to hammer out a basic curriculum for Chinese Muslim schools in general, nor was he trying to develop a systematic explication of Muslim thought and philosophy. In the introduction to his first book, Wang wrote that his primary interest lay in helping his colleagues better understand Islam, to "save them from [the] mistakes" he used to hear in the classroom.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, many of the concepts that Wang's works explicate were later used and developed by subsequent authors.

Wang's work is the best example we have of original authorship in the Chinese Muslim educational system taking place, as it were, "on the ground." That is, Wang's work was not necessarily intended to have a wide-ranging impact, and its initial purpose was simply to foster the development of Wang's own students and of

48. The *Shengyu* never appeared as a separate text, hence its title. It is included in ZQX, pp. 305–21. See also Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 24.

49. Tazaka, *Chūgoku ni okeru Kaikyō*, p. 1367. See also Wang's biography in HRZ (Qingdai), p. 38.

50. Wang Daiyu, "Zixu," in ZQX, p. 17.

his most immediate colleagues. As we have seen, however, Chinese Islamic scholarly knowledge was characterized by the widespread dissemination of texts of all kinds and an emphasis on the transmission of textual knowledge across generations. In this context, Wang's texts came ultimately to provide a model for many others working in the system. Wang's scholarship is also characteristic of Chinese Muslim textual production in general. Just as Wu Zixian's translations grew out of a collective body of individuals (his brother, his sons, and his colleagues), Wang's scholarship also arose out of a collective setting. His students and colleagues were its most immediate contributors, but later teachers and writers used and added to his principles.

In terms of understanding the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholarship grew out of an entire intellectual environment, another important writer is Ma Zhu, a native of Baoshan 保山, Yunnan, and the author of the important *Qingzhen zhinan* (1680). This book reveals much about the culture of writing in the Chinese Islamic educational network and the extent to which it had developed since the publication of the first translations and books by members of the educational network.

Ma Zhu's career was markedly different from Wang's, as were the ways in which he was connected to the network. He is representative of a group of authors who, although they passed through the examination system and even served as officials, maintained close ties to the Chinese Muslim educational apparatus. Ma Zhu's work reflects both aspects of his intellectual development.

Ma Zhu was a descendant of the great Sayyid (a title reserved for the descendants of the Prophet) Saidianchi Shansiding Wuma'er 賽典赤瞻思丁烏馬兒)—Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din Omar—who settled in Yunnan during the Yuan. (Ma Zhu repeatedly claimed that he was the Sayyid's fifteenth-generation descendant.)⁵¹ He was born to a family of minor gentry; his father, Ma Shikong 馬師孔, was a first-degree holder and worked as teacher in a school training examination candidates in the Confucian classics. Ma Zhu became

51. The main source of detail about Ma Zhu's life is a long, well-written chronological autobiography; see Ma Zhu, "Yusufu zhuan" 郁速馥傳 (Autobiography of Yusuf), in QZZN, pp. 28–33.

an orphan at an early age, and there is no indication whether he received an Islamic education during his formative years. He did, however, receive an education in the Chinese classics, and at the age of eighteen he passed the first examination and became a *xiuca*. He was subsequently appointed to a minor position in the local prefectural administration. Two years later he joined the court of the last claimant to the Ming throne, Yongli 永曆, as a minor bureaucrat.⁵² After the defeat of Yongli in 1659, Ma Zhu moved to several locations in Yunnan, trying to earn a living as a teacher (particularly in Wuding 武定). In 1669, when he was about thirty, Ma Zhu left Yunnan for Beijing.⁵³ It was there that he undertook serious study of Islamic texts, probably at the central mosque of Beijing in Ox Street 牛街, which also served as an Islamic library. As part of his studies, he visited the Chinese Muslim centers in Shandong and Jiangnan. Ma Zhu tells us that the major driving force behind his studies was the memory of his holy Muslim ancestor the Sayyid and his admiration for Wang Daiyu, who had been in Beijing twenty years before him and had perhaps worked in the same place.⁵⁴

In 1678 or 1679, Ma completed a work that was to have huge influence, the *Qingzhen zhinan*. He also gave the book an Arabic title: *Al-Murshid ila 'Ulum al-Islam*, that is, "The guide to the sciences (literally, 'red knowledge') of Islam."⁵⁵ This book is probably the single most respected of the many works written by Chinese Muslim scholars and is known in the Chinese Muslim scholarly community simply as *Zhinan* 指南, the *Guide*. This huge book has over 1,700 leaves, in eight volumes, covering Islamic law and ritual. It was republished in many editions; after its first publication in 1683, it was reissued in 1688 and 1707, and from 1811 to 1885, it was reissued eight more times. In 1864 the great imam of Yunnan, Ma Dexin 馬得新 (1794–1874), a descendant of Ma Zhu, published a re-

52. QZZN, p. 28.

53. Ibid., p. 29.

54. HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 332–34.

55. The idea of writing "guides" is a clear sign of Sufi influence; instructional literature was very popular within Sufi circles. In addition to the *Mirsad*, other texts belonging to this genre were known in China at the time; see Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Use by Liu Chih," p. 104.

vised version in four volumes, the *Zhinan yaoyan* 指南要言 (Summary of the *Guide*).⁵⁶

The book is a systematic presentation of Islam. Ma Zhu began by presenting Islam on a metaphysical level (i.e., its cosmology, theology, and the nature of divine relations with the human world) and then moved on to a brief explication of Islamic law. For the present discussion, however, the context of the *Guide* is more important than its content. If Chinese Muslim scholars in general never worked within a vacuum, no single Chinese Muslim scholar was more self-conscious in situating himself and his work within the context of a broad and distinguished scholarly community than was Ma Zhu.

After completing the manuscript in the late 1670s, Ma Zhu, his wife, Fatima 法土墨, and their two sons, Ma Shiqi 馬世麒 and Ma Shixiong 馬世雄,⁵⁷ embarked on a remarkable tour of all major centers in the educational network, taking with them Ma Zhu's work. In an account Ma wrote of this journey, he explained, "I wanted to meet the famous teachers of China 海內名師, observe their books, and listen to their teachings" 睹其書聞其教.⁵⁸ It was during the journey that Ma Zhu came to be known as the Master of the *Guide* 指南老人.⁵⁹ While visiting these centers, most of them in Jiangnan, particularly Nanjing, Ma Zhu discussed his work with colleagues, received comments and corrections, and got editorial assistance.

His tour provides a virtual map of the educational network as it existed at the time and outlines both its geographical spread and the density of its membership. Ma Zhu first went to Nanjing, where he met Liu Sanjie, Ma Zhiqi, and Yuan Ruqi.⁶⁰ All were important writers and teachers in their own right. The choice of Nanjing as his first stop is indicative of the centrality of this center.

56. Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, pp. 35–36.

57. Ma Zhu sometimes referred to himself using an Arab name, Yusuf. His sons Ma Shiqi and Ma Shixiong 馬世雄 are known by their Chinese names only. Ma Zhu's wife is known only by her Arabic name.

58. This piece was inserted later into the fourth volume of the book and is cited in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 46–47.

59. Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 84.

60. *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 47.

Obtaining the endorsement of the scholars there was so important that it was undertaken even though it meant that he had to travel southward from Beijing to Nanjing and then northward to Jining. In Jining, Ma Zhu met Li Yanling, a colleague of Chang Yunhua and one of the figures who appears on the greetings list published with the book. In Shaanxi, he met with the scholar and teacher She Qiling 舍起靈 (1630–1710), and in Hunan he met Huangfu Jing, who is listed in the *Genealogy* as a disciple of Ma Minglong. Most important, however, the primary result of this tour was a long list of twenty-four greetings praising the author and his work, written by the Chinese Muslim scholars with whom he shared it. The list is a demonstration of the relationship, density, and extent of the Chinese Muslim scholarly network in the late seventeenth century. This practice of soliciting and collecting greetings for the book is apparently without precedent (at least within the Chinese Muslim scholarly community) and should be taken as indicative of the huge significance attached to the long-awaited publication of the *Guide*.⁶¹ Of course, one cannot overlook the relentless activities of the work's author, who enjoyed a great deal of prestige because of his noble origins, which he made sure were lost on no one—even, as we shall see, the Kangxi 康熙 emperor.

The publication of the *Guide* took place more than a hundred years after what I have identified as the moment of establishment of an indigenous Islamic education network in China and about twenty years after the publication of the first Islamic book written in Chinese, which appeared within the context of that network. It is clear that at this point in the development and consolidation of Chinese Islamic knowledge, the Chinese Muslim scholarly community had achieved a critical mass, such that the production and publication of such a work would have been eagerly anticipated and widely publicized. Ma Zhu's noble origins clearly played a role in the work's fame. The fact that Ma Zhu could claim relationship to the great Shams al-Din, a direct descendant of Muhammad and, in turn, of Adam himself, certainly enhanced his reputation. The

61. For a basic examination of the content of the greetings, see Wu Jianwei, “*Qingzhen zhinan hainei zengyanshi kaolue*.”

list of greetings, however, remains our most tangible sign of the great importance accorded to Ma Zhu's text.

The list and the greetings were appended to the *Guide* and published in its first volume.⁶² Together the two provide a remarkably well documented account of the multiple scholarly contacts that undergirded Chinese Muslim scholarship of the period. The list of the greetings was entitled, significantly, *Hainei zengyan* 海内贈言, or "Greetings [from] throughout the Country," or simply "Chinese Greetings." *Hainei* literally means "within the seas" and was used as a designator for China. The author's choice to publish them under this heading is one indication of the fact that he considered the community that produced them to be Chinese. This point is not as self-evident as it may seem: this marked the first time that a term referring to all Chinese Muslim scholars as one, countrywide, and distinct group appears in *print*. The publication of the *Guide* came approximately three years after the composition of Zhao's *Genealogy*, a document that similarly demonstrates the ways in which the Muslim scholarly community in China was preoccupied with itself as a specifically Chinese entity. (Seventeen of the twenty-one persons mentioned in the list of greetings published with the *Guide* are also included in Zhao's *Genealogy* as teachers, the same teachers that Ma called the "country's famous teachers.")

A careful reading of the list of greetings reveals much about the self-perceptions of Ma Zhu's immediate circle of readers and the scope of the Muslim scholarly network at the time. Every person on the list noted his title or position within the scholarly community. The list covers people from a wide geographical area, but the Jiangnan representation is the most apparent. More than a third of the individuals on the list come from big cities such as Beijing, Nanjing, Kaifeng, Xi'an, or Kunming. Eight are from Jiangnan (including four from Nanjing and four from other locations in Jiangsu, who studied in Nanjing); three are from Yunnan; two from Shaanxi (one from Xi'an); two from Shandong (both from Jinan);

62. The first volume also included his autobiography and letters.

one from Sichuan; three from Hebei (all from the Beijing area); one from Hunan; and one from Henan (Kaifeng).⁶³

Most of the people add a title associated with education to their names.⁶⁴ In all but four cases, these titles are taken from the Confucian education system. Of these remaining four, two cases provide an obscure title that seems to imply a connection to studying, teaching, or other scholarly activity. For instance, Liu Sanjie of Nanjing (the father of Liu Zhi), added the title *guangxue* 廣學 to his name in the list of greetings. It is possible that the title means director of studies (being close to *guangwen* 廣文). We know from Zhao's *Genealogy* that Liu Sanjie was a teacher in the school of Yuan Ruqi. A similar case is that of Zheng Shichang 鄭士昌, who added the title *bowen* 博文 to his name. In the third instance, Yang Tianqiu 楊天蚰 of Hebei and Ma Suitai 馬綏泰 of Kunming added to their names the word *houxue* 後學, meaning "your pupil" or "your disciple." The fourth case is the only one in the entire list that provides a title unrelated to education. Zheng Zhibi 鄭之璧 of Nanjing signed his greeting *bashiweng* 八十翁, that is, "octogenarian." With this sole exception, all the titles, both commonplace and obscure demonstrates how particular individuals were related to and situated within the broader Chinese Muslim scholarly community.

The remaining seventeen figures added more "familiar" titles, associated with the official Chinese education and examination systems. Ma Tingrui 馬廷瑞 of Jiangsu, Ma Tiren 馬體仁 of Kunming, and Yang Guozhu 楊國柱 of Hebei identified themselves as *jiaoling* 教領 (instructor). Cai Heming 蔡鶴鳴 of Baoning 保寧, Sichuan, added the title *guangwen* 廣文 (prefectural director of studies). Ai Yannian 艾延年 of Jiangchuan 江川, Kunming, Yunnan, labeled himself *ruxue* 儒學 (former director of studies) and added *Kunming bashisou* 昆明八十叟 (an octogenarian from Kunming). Xie Qiyu 偈啓裕 of Dongquan 棟川, Yunnan, added the title *xiaolian* 孝廉 (that is, a holder of the *juren* degree) and was probably the only degree holder in the group.⁶⁵ Ten persons added the

63. All greeters signed and indicated their place of residence.

64. For the entire list, see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 350–56.

65. I have not been able to establish when he passed his examination and obtained his degree.

title *mingjing* 明經 to their names. As noted above, during the Qing this was an unofficial way of designating a *gongsheng* 貢生—that is, a student who had been admitted as a nominee to the local Confucian schools but still had to pass the metropolitan examinations before he qualified for office.

The use of such familiar titles underscores the “Chineseness” implied by the list’s heading: “Greetings [from] Throughout the Country.” The titles, standard ones among the Confucian intellectual elite, are unselfconsciously deployed by these Muslim scholars to describe themselves and their place within their own, implicitly parallel, network of learning.

In addition to the list of greetings, the first volume of the *Guide* included another important source for understanding the scholarly network undergirding it. This was a formal preface by Ma Chengyin, the son of the Muslim general-turned-rebel Ma Xiong. Ma Chengyin wrote his preface in 1681, two years before the publication of the book. By way of opening, Ma Chengyin, a patron and the son of a patron of Islamic scholarship, stated that the *Guide* was the most important book to be published in China since the works of Wang Daiyu.⁶⁶ He went to say that the *Guide* ought to be regarded as a continuation of Wang’s book.⁶⁷ Ma Chengyin’s implication is clear: Chinese Muslim literary works are not the product and sole possession of one specific author but instead are components of a growing body of knowledge. Different scholars across space and time engage with this body of knowledge, comment on it, and, in the most distinguished cases (like that of the *Guide*), add to it substantively.

This vision of scholarship as growing out of a distinct, unitary community is corroborated by the inclusion in the preface of a list of eleven Muslim scholars, all identified by Ma Chengyin as *Huiru* 回儒 (Chinese Muslim scholars).⁶⁸ The list includes the names of eminent Chinese Muslim teachers and scholars of the time, along with their places of residence. All the names also appear in Zhao’s

66. Ma Chengyin, “*Zhinan xu*” 摺南敘 (Preface to the *Guide*). In QZZN, pp. 6–7.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

Genealogy. Ma Chengyin's primary aim in including this list is to demonstrate the extent of Chinese Muslim intellectual activity. His words express his awareness of the immense cultural importance of the *Han Kitab* project. Of Wang Daiyu, the first on his list, he wrote: "Even though I have never seen the man [Wang], his [*Zhengqiao*] *zhenquan*, which was transmitted all over China, has the merit [that lasts for] ten thousand generations. Without his [literary] work, I would not know of him" 雖未及見其人而真詮一集神游海宇功在万世非其文吾不知其人也.⁶⁹ The list of personages mentioned in Ma Chengyin's preface along with the list of greetings for the *Guide* provide a Who's Who of the leading intellectual figures of seventeenth-century Chinese Islam. They lay out the groundwork for a general map of scholars and teachers of the period and include individuals from all major Chinese Muslim educational centers, as well as some peripheral areas like Yunnan.⁷⁰

Liu Zhi: The Culmination of Authorship

When Ma Zhu was in Nanjing, he met with Yuan Ruqi and Liu Sanjie. It is very likely that he also met Yuan Ruqi's disciple (and Liu Sanjie's son) Liu Zhi, who was then in his late teens or early twenties. Liu Zhi emerged twenty years later as the most systematic and prolific author of the scholarly network. His work symbolizes the culmination of Chinese Muslim literary productivity over the course of the previous century, and he himself represents the maturation of the educational network and stands as one of its finest products. He was able to read and write three languages and

69. QZZN, p. 7.

70. In Ma Chengyin's list, we find Chang Yunhua, the founder of the education center in Jining. Also from Jining is Li Yanling, and from the Jiangnan area are Ma Zhiqi 馬之騏 of Jinling (Nanjing), Ma Minglong, and Ma Junshi (Ma Zhongxin), the teacher of Wang Daiyu. A third person from Jiangsu is Ma Chengyi 馬承益, a disciple of Ma Junshi. From the northwest are Li Pingxu 李秉旭, a disciple of Feng Tongyu; and She Qiyun 舍起雲 of Guanxi 關西, Shaanxi, a disciple of Chang Yunhua and classmate of She Yunshan. From Hebei in the northeast there is Ma Huajiao 馬化蛟, and from the south one Huangfu Jing from Yue 粵, whom we met as the disciple of Ma Minglong and an important teacher in his own right and who established a school in Xi'an. Huangfu was a contemporary of Zhao Can and apparently at that time had only a few disciples; see *JXCP*, pp. 98–100.

was well read in the Islamic texts available in China at the time as well as in the Chinese classics.

Liu Zhi was born in Shangyuan 上元 (Nanjing) and, upon the urging of his father, decided on a life of scholarship. Liu's father was a teacher in the Yuan school in Nanjing, where Liu himself studied for many years under his guidance and that of Yuan Ruqi. His father, evidently a major influence in his intellectual development, often lamented the lack of Islamic literature in Chinese. It is probably as a direct result of this that Liu went on to become the most prolific of Chinese Muslim authors.

Liu can be considered the quintessential Chinese Muslim scholar in that he existed at the center—chronological, dynastic, and geographic—of the Chinese Muslim educational system. As a scholar working in the later decades of the seventeenth century and the first decades of the eighteenth, his career coincided with what my research suggests was the moment of consolidation of the educational network, just as it began clearly to act as a school, as that term has been used by others as a framework for analysis. As the son of a teacher and the disciple of a major teacher, Liu's networks of filiations brought him into contact with all the major teachers and scholarly figures of his time. Finally, his location in Nanjing put him at the hub of scholarly activity in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

This constellation of circumstances shaped Liu from his early childhood, and he was able to decide on his scholarly course at an extraordinarily early age. Liu was to become a prolific scholar not just by the standards of Chinese Muslim scholarship but by those of Chinese scholarship in general as well. He knew Chinese, Arabic and Persian; was well versed in the Confucian classics and Chinese dynastic histories; and read Jesuit Christian literature as well as the Buddhist and Daoist classics. All told, it is likely that Liu was one of the best educated, most versatile, and most widely read scholars—Muslim or otherwise—to work in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Liu's thirst for knowledge was apparently unquenchable, and he complained that his friends often mocked him for being a bookworm who studied day and night. In pursuit of knowledge, he

traveled throughout China, to Shandong, Henan, Hebei, Hunan, Hubei, Shaanxi, and Gansu—all important nodes in what by Liu's time had become a widespread educational network. Upon ending his travels, he returned to live in Nanjing and began a lifetime of writing and translation.⁷¹

At the age of fifteen, after training in Chinese, Liu had begun a staggeringly comprehensive course of studies. In a preface he wrote when he finished his last important work, a biography of Muhammad, he looked back on his scholarly life:

Authoring books is a very difficult thing. I was fifteen when I began studying. For eight years I read with robust diligence the Confucian classics, the histories, philosophies, belles lettres, and the books of various schools. For six additional years I read the Tianfang [Islamic] classics, for three more years I read the Buddhist canon, for one more year I read the Daoist canon. I then proceeded with reading Western [European]⁷² books, [a total of] 137 copies. [So I] achieved mastery through comprehensive study of the doctrines of the various schools. However, I was filled with admiration for Islamic doctrines. I wrote a hundred volumes [of books] and what [I have] already published is just one tenth [of them]—the *Dianli* and the *Xingli* and books of that sort. The *Dianli* is a book that clarifies the [rules] of the teaching. The *Xingli* is a book that clarifies the [principle of the] Dao. Now the *Zhisheng shilu* [Records of the Most Sagely (of Islam)] clarifies the sources where the teaching and the Dao originated in order to present [it] for all under heaven and in order to reveal the entirety of the Dao. Thus these three books are one composition. 著書至不易也。予年十五而有志於學。八年膏晷而儒者之經史子集及雜家之書閱遍。又六年讀天方經。又三年閱釋藏竟。又一年閱道藏竟。繼而閱西洋書一白三十七種。會通諸家。而折衷於天方之學。著書數百卷。已刊者什一。典禮性理數種而已。典禮者。明教之書也。性理者。明道之書也。今復著至聖緣以明教道淵源之自出而示天下以證道之全體也。蓋三書者。三而一者也。⁷³

71. Liu Zhi, "Zhushu shu" 著書述 (On writing books), ZSSL, 76b–77a. See also HRZ (Qingdai), pp. 357–60.

72. Liu must here be referring to European (Jesuit) books since he has already made separate mention of reading Islamic texts. Also one of Liu's preface writers and colleagues, Yang Peilu 楊裴錄, specifically uses the term "European books" *ouluoba zhi wen* 歐羅巴之文 in his preface to Liu's *Tianfang dianli*; see HRZ (Qingdai), pp. 363–64.

73. Liu Zhi, "Zhushu shu," ZSSL, 76b–77a; also in HRZ (Qingdai), p. 357.

In describing his course of studies, Liu Zhi expressed his awareness of his special cultural position at the intersection of various ideational systems, with access to many different strands of Chinese cultural tradition.

The main motivation behind his scholarly work was not simply the desire to spread the knowledge of Islam. It seems to have been more philosophical. Liu wrote that after much study he had arrived at the conclusion that the basic principle (*li* 理) of all teachings was the same and that the sages “of the East and of the West” were motivated by the same ideas,⁷⁴ a feature of his thought typical to many of his colleagues as well.

Liu prided himself on three works in particular. The first dealt with the metaphysics of Islam, the second with Islamic law, and the third was a translation of an Arabic biography of Muhammad, to which Liu added some original material. Through the very categorization of Islam in this fashion—as divisible into three interrelated and fundamental components: metaphysics, law, and the “sage” Muhammad—we see Liu’s systematic approach to study. Whereas various scholarly predecessors had provided general explanations of Islam or discussed specific issues, Liu attempted to deal with the thought system in its entirety, dedicating entire books to each of its fundamental aspects. This increased systematization can, I think, be seen as one symptom of the gradual consolidation and development of Chinese Islamic scholarship as a whole, a consolidation and development that reached an apogee in Liu’s lifetime. Chinese Islamic tradition was not based on a static, timeless cultural “import”; rather, it was flexible and constantly in development.

Liu’s first important book was the *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (Metaphysics and principle of Islam), a five-volume work concerned with all conceivable aspects of theology and Islamic cosmology.⁷⁵ Its title reveals the author’s familiarity with Neo-

74. Liu stated this idea in several places, among them his introduction to the *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (Law and rituals of Islam). See Liu Zhi, “Zixu” 自序 (author’s preface), *Tianfang dianli*, p. 1a.

75. Liu Zhi, *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (1760).

Confucian thought⁷⁶ and can be translated as *Reason and Principle of Islam*. At heart, the work limns Islamic understandings of God by placing them in a comparative context; the theology—and the God—outlined by Liu are compared to all other theologies current in Liu's own cultural context. Thus, for example, Liu makes a comparison between the Daoist concept of *wu* 無 (non-being), the Buddhist concept of *kong* 空 (emptiness), and the Chinese Islamic concept of *Zhenyi* 真一 (the True and One).

Liu's interaction with his surrounding culture was not limited to conceptual comparisons. He included in the *Tianfang xingli* sections on biology, geography, and astronomy and their bases in Islamic doctrine. This was Liu's attempt to produce a Chinese Islamic version of the late Ming/early Qing genre of encyclopedic classification of knowledge, itself linked in part to the Kangxi {Qianlong?} emperor's sponsorship of the cataloguing and classification of all book-based knowledge.⁷⁷

Since my purpose here is to focus specifically on the networks of learning that gave rise to Chinese Muslim scholarship, any lengthy discussion of the philosophical and theological content of Liu's work is out of place. For present purposes, however, the comparative aspect of Liu's work warrants brief attention. Quite aside from its philosophically and theologically noteworthy aspects, Liu's interest in reading Islam against Buddhism and Daoism shows him in dialogue not simply with Chinese Muslim scholarship but with the literary traditions and genres of other Chinese communities as well. Liu was convinced that Islam was relevant to all readers, not just Muslims. In fact he tried on at least two occasions to draw the Qing court's attention to his works.

We see just how flexible and broad some Chinese Muslim scholars could take their intellectual community to be. As Liu wrote: "I am indeed a scholar of Islamic learning. However, it is my opinion that if one does not read [exhaustively] the classics, the histories, and the doctrines of the hundred schools, then Islamic scholarship

76. Bai Shouyi comments that one point of difference between Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi is their attitude toward Neo-Confucianism. Wang was hostile, whereas Liu was profoundly influenced by it; see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 62.

77. See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 157.

will be confined to one corner and will not become the common learning of the world.”⁷⁸

Liu's second book, written in Hangzhou, is the *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (literally “Laws and rituals of Islam,” but more simply “The institutions of Islam”). Published sometime after 1703, the work deals with Islamic law and ritual and is a compilation of portions of several different Persian and Arabic works in translation. Liu tells us in the introduction that it is a “reworking, expansion, and investigation of Islamic law” based on a book written on the same topic by his father.⁷⁹

Most significant for our current purposes is that the work, like the *Tianfang xingli* before it, shows the high level of interaction between Liu and the broader scholarly community, Muslim and non-Muslim, that surrounded him. It also was patterned after literary forms and methods popular in his day, in this case the “evidential” (*kaozheng* 考證) trend in scholarship.⁸⁰ The work is structured like an encyclopedia: each precept is presented and explained; this is followed by a section entitled *kaozheng*, which explains the roots and origins of the specific ritual in question using earlier Islamic sources. The methodology—and the terminology—were those used by other (Confucian) *kaozheng* scholars. Liu's effort to deploy *kaozheng* methods is seen most clearly in a short treatise on the origins of the Arabic alphabet, *Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義 (Explication of the meaning of Arabic letters), in which he presented the supposedly “ancient” form of Arabic letters alongside their modern version.⁸¹

After finishing the *Dianli*, Liu took his works to Beijing and tried, like Ma Zhu some twenty years before him, to introduce them to the court. Although he failed to gain the court's interest, he managed to engage in a dialogue with several non-Muslim offi-

78. Liu Zhi, “Zixu” (Author's introduction), *Tianfang xingli*, 1a.

79. According to the introduction Liu wrote for the *Tianfang dianli*, his father translated a book about Islamic ritual and law, the *Tianfang lifa* 天方禮法, which was the basis for his work; see *ibid*.

80. See Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 99.

81. Liu Zhi, *Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義 (Explication of the origin of the Arabic characters), published in Nanjing ca. 1706.

cials, whom he met at an inn. Some of them read the *Dianli* and contributed prefaces to the book. All were particularly impressed with Liu's ability to explain "a strange culture coming from afar, using their own [i.e., Chinese] language and their own [i.e., Confucian] canon."⁸² Xu Zhuo 徐倬 of Deqing 德清, Zhejiang, a *jinshi* of 1673 (d. 1711), praised Liu Zhi for his use of the "language of the *Ru* [in order to transmit the] knowledge of the West" 用儒文傳西學.⁸³ Lu You 鹿祐 of Yingzhou 穎州, Anhui, a *jinshi* of 1682, compared the book to the Six Classics, and the sages of Islam to those of China. Jing Rizhen 景日珍, of Dengfeng 登封, Henan, a *jinshi* of 1691, commended the author for his "thorough knowledge of the [Confucian] classics" 折衷六經.⁸⁴ In these reactions, we see again that, in the case of Liu, Chinese Muslim scholarship grew out of a community of learning that was not inevitably circumscribed by Islam.

Liu actively attempted to engage in a dialogue with other scholars (notably non-Muslim Confucian ones) and to receive their recognition of his work. It is perhaps due to his efforts that *Tianfang dianli* found its way, about seventy years after its publication, into the greatest collection of Chinese books, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 and received a notice in the general catalogue prepared for this collection, the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要. The author of the short entry on the book was obviously biased against it. He did, however, express some appreciation for Liu's knowledge of Confucianism:

Islam was from the beginning a somewhat absurd belief, but he [Liu] had a good deal of knowledge in Confucian books, so he borrowed variously from the meaning of the classics to decorate his arguments. His literary style is in fact rather elegant. But the root was wrong to begin with, and decorating it cleverly with literary elegance did him no good.⁸⁵

82. Both of the Confucian degreeholders who wrote prefaces to Liu's books describe how he approached them in Beijing and handed them his books. See Xu Zhuo, "Xu" 序 (Preface); and Lu You, "Xu," in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 366–67 and 367–68, respectively.

83. Lu You, "Xu," *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 368.

84. Jing Rizhen, "Xu" (Preface to the *Tianfang dianli*), *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 364.

85. *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, no. 2640. I thank David Schaberg for letting me use his translation of this notice.

Each of these two works—the *Tianfang xingli* and the *Tianfang dianli*—includes a bibliography of the sources used by Liu in the course of his writing; these lists further clarify our understanding of the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholarship was invariably produced in an ongoing conversation with earlier works and ideas. The list in the *Tianfang xingli* cites forty books; that in the *Tianfang dianli* forty-five, for a total of sixty-seven different titles (nineteen entries in the two lists overlap).

To quote Paul Pelliot, the lists are in fact a “catalogue of almost all Muslim titles existing in China around the 1700s.”⁸⁶ Leslie and Wassel, who have made use of a number of different editions of Liu’s books and compared the different researches regarding the lists, provide the fullest, most accurate, and most reliable reconstruction of original titles listed.⁸⁷ The combined list covers an array of fields and topics. In addition to the Qur’an, it contains standard Sunni Hanafite (one of the four schools in Islamic Law) texts on law and ritual; a number of Sufi texts (mainly of the Kubrawiyya sect, but also of the Naqshbandiyya); biographies of Muhammad and of Sufi shaykhs; and Arabic texts on philosophy, poetry, astronomy, and geography.⁸⁸

Liu’s third important book is a biography of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* 天方至聖實錄 (The veritable records of the Most Sagely of Islam). It is based mainly on a Persian translation of a biography of the Prophet—*Tarjuma i Maulud i Mustafa*—written by Sa’id bin-Mas’ud al-Kazaruni (d. 1357).⁸⁹ Liu

86. Quoted in Leslie and Wassel, “Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih,” p. 78. Leslie and Wassel suggest that in fact there were more Arabic and Persian books in China at the time.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., p. 104.

89. Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 49. The only “Western” work on this text is an unpublished dissertation prepared for the department of Arabic Literature of Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, by Luttfi Mahmood Mansour. Mansour provides a short history of the text and a full punctuated and annotated version of it. According to Mansour, the original version was written in Arabic by Sa’id al-Din Muhammad Ibn Mas’ud al-Kazaruni (d. 1357), a Persian Sufi scholar. The author’s son ‘Afif translated the text into Persian in 1383 and gave it the title mentioned by Liu Zhi. The book was never published but circulated in manu-

probably considered this composition to be his most important work. It, too, shows him working in dialogue with other scholars. Liu wrote that he tried to compose a biography of Muhammad and showed it to his friends, but neither he nor they were pleased with the result.⁹⁰ Then he heard about a Mr. Xu 許, who owned a library in Chenliu 陳留 (in Henan) containing many classics. "There," he says, "I came across a 'western classic' 西經, which turned out to be a biography of the great Sage." This, Liu declared, felt tantamount to divine intervention, a sign from the "Creator" approving his work 造物成就我如此其巧耶.⁹¹

The book was completed in 1724, but Liu was unable to find a publisher. Only in 1775, after Liu's death, was the book published. The publication of the work, like its composition, came about through the interaction of a number of different Chinese Muslim scholars. All scholars of Chinese Islam state that the biography of the Prophet is the most important of Liu Zhi's works in terms of its influence among the educational network's constituency.⁹² The missionary Isaac Mason, who translated the book at the beginning of the twentieth century, wrote that it was widely known among Muslims in China and that its composer was the most famous of Chinese Muslim authors.⁹³ Liu also published many more works, among them the *Tianfang sanzijing* 天方三字經 (Islam's *Three Character Classic*, an explication of key concepts in the Qur'an)⁹⁴ as well as the *Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義 mentioned above.⁹⁵

During the earlier years of his scholarly productivity, Liu enjoyed the sponsorship and the support of a Chinese Muslim official, Hei Mingfeng 黑鳴鳳, a military *jinshi* from Shandong,⁹⁶ who con-

script form throughout the Muslim world from India to Turkey. See Mansour, "*Sirat al-Nabi al-Muntaqa*."

90. Liu Zhi, "Zhushu shu," in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 358.

91. *Ibid.*

92. See Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, p. 73; *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 58.

93. Mason, "Preface," in Mason, *The Arabian Prophet*, pp. 6–7.

94. Liu Zhi, *Tianfang sanzijing* 天方三字經 (Islam's *Three Character Classic*), 1870 ed.

95. Liu Zhi, *Tianfang zimu jieyi* 天方字母解義, 1879 ed.

96. Hei Mingfeng received his degree in 1703; see his biography in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 66–67.

tributed prefaces to all of Liu's early works and also wrote a multivolume commentary on the *Tianfang xingli*.⁹⁷ Hei was probably the one who organized a "publication subvention" for Liu's first important book. Liu thanked three different persons who donated money to help pay the cost of publication: "The book was printed at Siming [a town in Zhejiang, near Ningbo]. The money [for it] came from three houses. One is the [house of] honorable Li Fengwu of Xiliang [Yunnan]; the second is the honorable Ma Yao-huan of Ningxia; the third is the honorable Hei Yuhui [Hei Ming-feng] of Linqing [Shandong]" 書刻於四明資成於三家西涼李公封五寧夏馬公耀寰臨清黑公羽輝.⁹⁸ Thus, by the time of Liu Zhi, Chinese Muslim scholarship had reached its most sophisticated point. It was the product of several intersecting countrywide networks of patronage, pedagogy, and collegiality.

Bibliography and Textual Consolidation

Chinese scholarship was not the product of the efforts of translators and authors alone. These scholars were supported by the work of numerous other people, who were related in various ways to the educational system and made up an important part of its constituency. These individuals commented on one another's original texts and translations, reviewed them, wrote prefaces and postfaces for them, and contributed greetings. Those who also worked as teachers introduced others' texts into their classrooms. Some also were publishers and printers; others simply contributed the financial resources needed to make publication and scholarship possible. In several cases, Muslims serving as officials in the bureaucracy lent their patronage to scholars. We have already seen, for example, the case of Hei Mingfeng, the military *jinshi* from Linqing, Shandong, who supported Liu Zhi's work, contributed prefaces to some of his works, and in 1707 even published a commentary on Liu's first book, the *Tianfang xingli*.

97. Hei Mingfeng, *Tianfang xingli benjing zhushi* 天方性理本經註釋 (Commentary on the *Tianfang xingli*), published in 1707.

98. Liu Zhi, "Lieyan" 例言 (Instructions), *Tianfang xingli*, 1.2b.

Another example, from an earlier period, is Ma Xiong 馬雄, also a military *jinsshi* and a commander in Guangxi province during the 1660s and the early 1670s.⁹⁹ Shortly after his appointment to the position, Ma Xiong established a Muslim school and mosque in the city of Yangzhou (near modern Guilin). He proceeded to invite all of China's best-known Muslim scholars and teachers to come and work together at his school. Such figures as Chang Yunhua, Li Yanling, Ma Junshi, Ma Zhiqi, Ma Minglong, and She Yunshan passed through this school at different points and possibly all met there together. At least two major Chinese Muslim books—one of Ma Minglong's translations and Chang Yunhua's text on Persian grammar—were first published with the help of Ma Xiong's school. It is possible that financial support for Ma Zhu's *Guide to Islam* came from Ma Xiong, although the text was not composed in Yangzhou. Ma Xiong's son, Ma Chengyin, contributed a long preface (1681) to the *Guide*, in which he mentioned many of the scholars associated with his father's school.

What Ma Xiong in effect created was a scholarly institute for Chinese Muslim thinkers, where they were provided the space, time, and financial support necessary to create their work. Most important, Ma Xiong's school provided the occasion for the direct interaction between a number of teachers, students, and authors. The texts written by these individuals reflect the community of knowledge of which they were a part and which Ma Xiong's efforts supported. The fact that Ma Xiong was a Confucian official in no way negated his sense of himself as a Muslim. His support of Chinese Muslim education was an expression of his ongoing connection to the Muslim community, one that in its focus on literati activity was entirely in keeping both with his understanding of his role as Muslim and with his role as Confucian official.¹⁰⁰

Finally, as way of concluding this discussion of the rise of authorship and book-based culture as key phenomena among the

99. Ma Xiong was a *jinsshi* of 1651. In 1661 he became the commandant of Guangxi and around then started patronizing Islamic scholars and teachers; see his biography in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 74–80.

100. On Ma Xiong's activities as a patron, see Bai Shouyi's study "Liuzhou Yisilan yu Ma Xiong" 柳州伊斯蘭與馬雄 (Islam in Liuzhou and Ma Xiong), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 396–412.

Chinese Muslim literati elite, it is helpful to observe their culmination, arguably the late eighteenth-century publication of the first Chinese Muslim bibliography, a bibliography that can be seen as an embryonic codification of the *Han Kitab* as a whole.

Sometime around 1780, Yuan Guozuo, a Muslim publisher and editor from Nanjing, compiled a list of texts entitled *Tianfang qunshu xu* 天方群書序 (An introduction to collected Islamic books). As noted above, Yuan was the grandson of Yuan Ruqi and was himself a teacher in the Yuan school. Yuan Guozuo published several works by Liu Zhi, to which he contributed prefaces.¹⁰¹

In the *Tianfang qunshu xu*, Yuan listed all Chinese Islamic works known to him. Yuan named twenty-nine texts, of which sixteen were printed and thirteen existed in manuscript. Yuan is particularly proud of including both published and unpublished materials: "Of the more than twenty books written by former generations, early and late, more than ten have been printed, [and] more than ten [which were] not printed have been transmitted to the present. I present here a list of all the printed and unprinted books."¹⁰²

Next to each entry, Yuan detailed the name of its author, its place of composition, and the location of its engraving blocks (to facilitate future printings). He attached this short text to the first printed edition of the *Tianfang zhisheng shilu*, the biography of the Prophet written about sixty years earlier by Liu Zhi. Yuan considered the publication of *The Veritable Records* to be the culmination of his editing, printing, and publishing endeavors; it was a project to which he had devoted many years. The short list appended to it, however, was no less significant; despite its unassuming appearance, it was in fact the first bibliography of Chinese Islamic books. Even though it did not, include all Chinese Islamic works extant in Yuan's day, this "Sinica Islamica" documented almost a century and a half of intensive Chinese Muslim literary production. Symptomatic of general eighteenth-century Chinese intellectual trends, Yuan's work is also indicative of significant developments within

101. All his prefaces are gathered in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 226–29, 394–95.

102. Yuan Guozuo, *Tianfang qunshu xu* (An introduction to the collection of Islamic books), in *ZSSL*. The translation is from Leslie, *Islamic Literature in China*, p. 12.

the Chinese-Muslim intellectual community. Yuan's compilation reflects trends in his broader geographical and cultural context and provides some insight into how Chinese-Muslim intellectuals viewed themselves vis-à-vis that context.

Elman has noted that "descriptive catalogs and annotated bibliographies became essential elements in the growth of evidential scholarship in Kiangnan during the eighteenth century."¹⁰³ Clearly, Yuan's work served not only to codify pre-existing scholarship but to stimulate its ongoing growth and production. Wang Ming-sheng's 王鳴盛 (1722–98) observation in the introduction to his study of the Seventeen Dynastic Histories that "bibliography is the most important field in scholarship"¹⁰⁴ is directly applicable to Yuan and his vision of the Chinese Muslim intellectual community. Bibliography, to Yuan's mind, was, at heart, the backbone of the *Han Kitab* and, in turn, of Chinese Muslim education, knowledge, and identity.

The composition of a bibliography during the early 1780s is significant for what it tells us about the interplay between the Chinese Muslim intellectual elite and the broader Chinese intellectual milieu. At this time, much of the broader Chinese literary elite was involved, to varying degrees, in the largest book-collecting project in Chinese history, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete library of the four treasures). Initiated in 1772 by the Qianlong emperor, the *Siku quanshu* project involved thousands of scholars, from within and without the state apparatus, in collecting, collated, correcting, editing, copying, and censoring more than ten thousand titles. It was a monumental project and had a far-ranging impact at both the state and the local level.

Yuan's bibliography has significance both internally, to the Chinese Muslim scholarly community as an independent entity, and externally, as one manifestation of a broader bibliographic trend in Chinese literati society. By touching on matters of concern both to a specifically Muslim scholarly collectivity and to the dominant scholarly elite, Yuan's bibliography in fact tied those two constituencies together, albeit implicitly. That is, by echoing the imperial

103. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, p. 160.

104. Cited at *ibid.*

elite's interest in bibliographic compilation while focusing on a specifically Islamic group of texts, Yuan's work seems to suggest his view that Chinese Islamic literary knowledge is an important component of scholarly knowledge in general, notwithstanding the fact that the very category was one defined and monopolized by the non-Muslim dominant elite.

Moreover, Yuan's endeavor points both to Chinese Muslim scholars' growing self-consciousness and to their growing vision of themselves as a distinct collectivity, with a distinct literary tradition. This aspect of Yuan's project is reflected in the fact that the very act of bibliographic compilation is the first stage in a process whereby a set group of texts come to enjoy a quasi-canonical status. Bibliographic compilation marked an important step in the codification of what would ultimately become a fixed curriculum within the Chinese Muslim educational network.

Yuan, as an inhabitant of Nanjing—the most vibrant and intense of Muslim intellectual centers—was surely aware of the *Siku quanshu* project. It is even possible that he compiled his own list of texts in direct response to the emperor's call for his subjects to report to Beijing the existence of books and manuscripts that might serve the purpose of the project.¹⁰⁵ At the very least, in his creation of a specifically Chinese Islamic bibliography, he was inspired by the state-sponsored bibliographic project. In either case, Yuan's bibliography is a clear indication that Chinese Muslim intellectuals viewed their literary tradition as having importance in its own right. In their choice of genres to write in and their approach to scholarly knowledge and its documentation, these intellectuals acted in reference to, and were influenced by, dominant, largely Confucian scholarly trends. By focusing on specifically Islamic texts, however, Yuan set Chinese Muslim knowledge apart, establishing it as a category in its own right as well as a subset of literary knowledge in general.

These points are perhaps worth some elaboration. As defined by Yuan Guozuo, the bibliography represents that which “has been transmitted from past generations”; it is the crystallization and summarization of the legacy of past scholarly generations. But who,

105. On the *Siku quanshu* project, see Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*.

exactly, were these past scholars? The works listed in Yuan's bibliography today are considered central components of the *Han Kitab*, and their authors oftentimes served also as teachers, figures who were the finest products of the Chinese Islamic educational network and its constituency.

With the gradual rise of authorship as a category distinct from but often overlapping that of pedagogy, these scholars became in and of themselves evidence for, and validation of the success of, the Chinese Muslim educational system. Moreover, they represent the interface between textuality and orality in the Chinese Muslim intellectual tradition. As teachers, their role was to preserve, codify, and transmit the body of written knowledge from the past; as scholars, their role was to compose works that were in turn to become important components of that very same body of knowledge.

This twofold process of transmission of and contribution to a growing quasi-canonical body of work is one seen most clearly in Zhao's *Genealogy*. The authors codified by Yuan were the definers, preservers, and transmitters of Chinese Islamic knowledge; they were also its producers. Thus works such as Zhao's and Yuan's both documented and expanded the body of knowledge deemed important to the Chinese Muslim intellectual community. This twofold process testified to the gradual consolidation of a Chinese Muslim scholarly identity and was bound up with the Islamic educational network. Finally, through its awareness of and participation in broader intellectual trends in Chinese society—the *Siku quanshu* project, for example, in the case of Yuan—the Islamic educational system as a whole was (to the mind of Chinese Muslim intellectuals, at least) brought under the umbrella of general Chinese literati society.

Apparently, Yuan considered the texts he was listing as a quasi-canonical whole, a corpus of knowledge produced by earlier generations of scholars. These scholars shared the same intellectual background and interests; Yuan considered himself to be one of the latest links in the chain of transmission of knowledge produced by them. Further, Yuan Guozuo was the great-grandson of Yuan Shengzhi, founder of the Yuan family Islamic school in Nanjing. He was the grandson of Yuan Ruqi, an important teacher in the

city and the teacher of Liu Zhi, one of the authors whose works Yuan Guozuo was editing and publishing. Moreover, Liu's father was a teacher in the Yuan school and a maternal cousin of Yuan Ruqi. The Yuan school was a center where other Chinese Islamic scholars met and visited, and it was a place where new texts were introduced and manuscripts preserved.¹⁰⁶ Some of its teachers and members authored books or wrote prefaces or greetings to other scholars' works. Thus, Yuan Guozuo could view not only the books he listed as a whole but also their authors as a collectivity. Yuan himself stood at an intersection where communal, family, and institutional ties joined scholarship and scholarly cooperation.

For Yuan Guozuo, his list of books provided consummate testimony to the existence of the specific school of scholarship to which he himself subscribed. A genealogy establishing the starting point of this school and marking its prominent figures had already been written in the last decade of the seventeenth century. A century later—in Yuan's time—the time had come to establish this school's canon and to list its creators.

In 1852 Lan Zixi, a Muslim scholar from Wuchang, an important center of the Islamic educational network, published a book entitled *Tianfang zhengxue* 天方正學 (Orthodox [correct] learning of Islam). This long work reprinted portions of the Qur'an in Arabic and contained a lengthy introduction to Islam. As its title suggests, it was an attempt to establish an "orthodoxy" of knowledge, or a specific Dao of learning, associated with major scholarly figures from antiquity to the present. The several introductions and the *lieyan* 列言 ("instructions" or "explication of contents") in the first volume repeated a similar theme: Islam originated in Arabia and arrived in China (天方至教來中華)¹⁰⁷ during the Sui and the Tang periods; it then took root and developed into a scholarly tradition, which the author presented as the "*Han Kitab*" 漢啓他補.¹⁰⁸ This

106. For example, one of the four copies of Zhao Can's *Genealogy* was given by Zhao to Yuan Ruqi in 1697 and has been kept in Yuan school since; see Yang Yongchang, "*Jingxue xi zhuanpu ji* She Qiling jianjie," p. 431.

107. Lan, "Xu" (Introduction), to idem, *Tianfang zhengxue*, p. 6.

108. Lan, "Zixu" (Author's introduction), to idem, *Tianfang zhengxue*, p. 4. In some places in the book, the term *Han Kitab* appears as *Han Qituobu* 漢啓佗補.

is the earliest instance in print of the term *Han Kitab* used as the collective title for Chinese Islamic books produced in the previous two centuries. The *Han Kitab*, according to Lan, was the knowledge produced by *Huiru* 回儒, Muslim scholars of the Dao. The purpose of his *zhengxue*, or orthodox learning, was to establish the correct genealogy of the Dao. In his introduction and throughout the entire book, Lan referred to the *Han Kitab* as *jingdian* 經典, "the canon." Lan explained that the first scholar of the *Han Kitab* had been Wang Daiyu of Nanjing and then went on to mention all the titles of books and their authors in the *Kitab*. In short, Lan's text was not radically different in purpose from many documents of this genre in the Neo-Confucian tradition.¹⁰⁹ He was seeking to establish the truth or the "orthodox learning." The text resembled Neo-Confucian genealogies of knowledge even in form. It first volume began with a table entitled "Tianfang Daotong tu" 天方道統圖 (Diagram of the transmission of the Dao of Tianfang), charting the transmission of the Islamic Dao from Adam, its first figure, to Muhammad, its culmination.¹¹⁰ The table looks exactly like the *Daotong* charts that appear in Confucian texts,¹¹¹ and in this sense it makes the simple visual argument that the Dao of Tianfang is a Dao of learning transmitted all the way from (mythical) antiquity to the (scholarly) present.



The scholars and teachers who stood behind the *Han Kitab* were both products of and contributors to the Chinese Muslim educational system. Chinese Muslim scholarship was not the result of individual and isolated activity; rather, it was the external manifestation of Chinese Muslim literati identity. Chinese Muslim teachers, students, grammarians, writers, translators, editors, bibliographers, publishers, and patrons were bound together as a constituency at-

109. On the uses of this genre in the Confucian context, see Wilson, *Genealogy of Way*, pp. 177–96.

110. Lan, *Tianfang zhengxue*, 1: 5.

111. See, e.g., Wilson, *Genealogy of Way*, pp. 262–63. In this instance the chart begins with Fuxi and ends with Wang Yangming.

tached, with varying degrees of intimacy, to the educational network.

The creation of Chinese Muslim scholarship was a process that was striking for its interactive and cooperative nature. Despite the transregional spread of Muslim communities throughout China, scholars involved in this project were not isolated from one another, nor were they isolated from their non-Muslim intellectual surroundings. There is no text contained within the *Han Kitab* that does not enter into direct dialogue with other texts and their authors; nor is there one that was published without some sort of legitimation or support (in the form of a preface or postface, greetings, or editorship) from the broader Chinese Muslim literati community. Most significant, every Chinese Muslim work of scholarship produced during the educational network's period of consolidation aims to be an expansion and continuation of a specifically Muslim Chinese body of knowledge, of the "Dao" of Islam.

The interconnectedness of Chinese Muslim scholarship took place on two levels: the physical and the intellectual. In both cases, the educational system was the instrument of consolidation. On the most immediate level, the schools and mosques that housed scholars and their students were the physical sites that first made scholarly interaction possible, and that ultimately resulted in its being one of the most essential features of Chinese Muslim intellectual life. The physical interaction afforded by these sites was metaphorically replicated in the purely intellectual realm, as well. Thus, just as learning took place through dialogue and personal interaction, scholarship was produced through the "dialogue" of a shared textual tradition. The ways in which scholars wrote in consort with one another and the ways in which they were enabled and supported by the Chinese Muslim literati constituency were both products of and a mirroring of the educational system itself. Finally, such interaction—both physical and intellectual—became a crucial manifestation of Chinese Muslim identity as that identity was understood and propagated by Chinese Muslim intellectuals.

Lan Xizi's *Tianfang zhengxue* (1852) is the third significant textual moment in the process of an emerging scholarly collective that be-

gan with Zhao Can's *Genealogy* (1670s) and continued with the short bibliography of Yuan Guozuo (1784). Lan was able to present the entire collection of books as one canon with a specific name and to count its scholars as one collective of students of a specific Dao of learning within China. This raises key questions, however. How could a Muslim scholar in the 1850s use the term "Dao" when referring to Islam so freely? How was the fact of that Dao's non-Chinese geographical source addressed?

FOUR

Muhammad and His Dao: Knowledge and Identity in the Han Kitab

Chinese Muslim scholars faced a twofold task. On one hand, they had to present themselves to their society as “scholars” as that category was understood and constructed by the Confucian elite. This was not a self-conscious strategy; rather, it developed in cultural dialogue with that elite, through the growth and patterning of the educational network. On the other hand, they had to understand their Islamic tradition vis-à-vis dominant Chinese cultural paradigms.

The first task was accomplished most effectively through the institutions and mechanisms of the educational network, which defined Islamic knowledge as an important component of knowledge in general; created cooperative groups of scholars; and grew to have a powerful sense of itself as an intellectual (rather than specifically religious) community. Through participation in this far-flung educational system, Muslim scholars were able to integrate themselves conceptually into a category recognized across all communities and strata of Chinese society, the “literatus.”

In this effort, these scholars appear to have been successful insofar as they viewed themselves (and portrayed themselves as) scholars worthy of the titles of literati society, and insofar as they came to understand Islamic teaching as an important part of what they did not hesitate to call the “Dao.” It is clear, too, that to some extent at least members of the Confucian elite were willing to accept them as scholars as they understood the category. The story of Ma Minglong’s conversation with the officials who came to visit the

mosque, for instance, hints strongly in this direction. Through the mechanisms of scholarly production and study and by qualifying as literati or scholars, Chinese Muslim intellectuals were able to come to an understanding of themselves as Chinese.

What, though, of the other half of their identity? If the Chinese Muslims deployed a sophisticated—if unselfconscious—strategy for “self-encompassment” into the dominant Chinese discourse, the way in which they connected the Chinese Muslim tradition as a whole to Chinese culture is just as striking. It is a strategy best revealed by examining the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars read Muhammad into Chinese scholarly tradition by arguing that he was the first link in the chain of transmission of knowledge, which they themselves cultivated and developed through scholarship. Just as Chinese Muslim scholars understood themselves as Chinese by free application of the categories of elite Chinese society, they also understood their tradition itself and, most specifically, its founder through available categories. Thus, Muhammad is portrayed in Chinese Muslim writings as a “sage” as well as a “righteous ruler”—central categories developed and recognized by Confucian scholarship.¹

The same dynamic has been explored by scholarship on Christians in China, most notably that of David Mungello in *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* and Nicholas Standaert in *Yang Tingyun: Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China*. Unlike most scholarship concerned with the history of Christianity in China, these two works focus on Chinese Christians rather on the Jesuits and other missionaries. Both are, in different ways, concerned with the question of how Chinese Christians viewed themselves vis-à-vis the broader Chinese society.²

1. In this context, the Chinese term *shengren* 聖人 is usually translated as “sage” or “holy man.” It was first translated by the Jesuit father Matteo Ricci as *santo* and used to describe the Christian saints; see Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, pp. 69, 94. However, translating *shengren* as “sage” is more accurate in the case of the Chinese Muslim Muhammad, since he embodied the attributes of wise political rule and judgment associated with the term. Muhammad was depicted by Chinese Muslims as more sagely than holy in the Western religious sense of that word.

2. To these two studies should be added a more recent one by Wang Xiaochao, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*.

As Mungello demonstrates, Chinese Christian intellectuals deployed tactics that we can also see in the Chinese Muslim setting. Chinese Christian scholars understood themselves, Mungello explains, as literati and understood their teaching (the “Lord of Heaven Teaching,” 天主教; that is, Christianity or, more narrowly, Roman Catholicism) as entirely consonant with Confucianism. Consequently, Mungello argues that these thinkers saw Christianity as something other than a belief system per se—as part of, if not the fulfillment of, Confucian orthodox thought.

For example, absent from the writings of Zhang Xingyao 張星曜 (1633–ca. 1725), a Chinese Christian author of the seventeenth century, is any enumeration of Christian “beliefs” or “theology.”

What appears to us as a glaring—or even deceptive—omission of his deepest beliefs from the *History* would have been viewed very differently [i.e., as fully understandable and not peculiar at all] by Zhang. He saw himself as a very orthodox literatus whose acceptance of the Lord of Heaven Teaching reinforced his orthodoxy. For this reason, the term “conversion” would have been entirely too radical to describe how Zhang viewed the adoption of this teaching from the West.³

There are elements here that are familiar. As we have seen in the *Genealogy* of Zhao Can, Chinese Muslim scholars, too, universally referred to Islam as “our teaching” 吾教 or “our Dao” 吾道.⁴ Only rather rarely did they identify it as a faith or belief system or consider their writings about it in any sense confessional. Their view of themselves as members of a broader literati class, rather than as members of a community of believers, is echoed in Mungello’s depiction of Zhang. Finally, the fact that Zhang, as Mungello puts it, understood Christian teachings as a reinforcement of Confucian orthodoxy, is also characteristic of Chinese Muslim thought of the period. Chinese Christians negotiated their own identity vis-à-vis Confucian intellectual culture in ways strikingly similar to their Muslim counterparts.

Standaert’s study of Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 (1562–1627) provides a more explicit instance of Christian thinkers’ self-inclusion in the body and history of orthodox Chinese thought. The parallel with

3. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, p. 144.

4. See Chapters 1 and 2.

Muslim strategies of self-inclusion is in this instance more explicit as well. Standaert identifies Yang's interest in the "universality of mind and *li*" (a major theme in Yang's writings) as based on the famous passage by Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139–92): "Sages appeared tens of thousands of generations ago. They shared this mind; they shared this principle (*li*). Sages will appear tens of thousands of generations to come. They will share this mind; they will share this principle. In the Southern or Northern Seas, in the Western or Eastern Seas, sages appear. They share this mind; they share this principle" 東南西北海有聖人出焉此心同也同此理也.⁵ Standaert explains Yang Tingyun's interpretation and use of this text to bring Christian thought into the mainstream of Chinese philosophical knowledge:

The sages everywhere within the four seas have the same mind and the same principle. Their essence is situated in the reverence and service of Heaven. From the Northern to the Southern Seas, from the Eastern to the Western Seas, there is no difference as far as this principle is concerned. Regardless as to whether one is a Confucian or Mohist, a Buddhist or Taoist, intelligent or dull, sage or unfilial, everyone has to revere the One. That is also why he follows the Westerners without acting contrary to the Way of Yao, Shun, Duke of Zhou and Confucius. The Way of the foreigners is indeed the same as the Way of the Ancient Chinese Saints and Sages.⁶

It is not surprising that this seemingly most inclusive of Confucian passages might be deployed by non-Confucians seeking to demonstrate the similarity and harmoniousness of their thought with Confucian tradition. Indeed, the same passage was used by Muslim thinkers for the same ends. Moreover, the possibility of direct intellectual contact between Muslim scholars and Christian missionaries or their texts should not be ruled out. Liu Zhi, as we have seen, listed "European" books as part of his reading. Many different Chinese Muslim scholars of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cited Lu Jiuyuan in their writings.⁷

5. Cited in Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 201.

6. Ibid.

7. This passage by Lu Jiuyuan also appears in a slightly different form: "Sages appear in the Eastern Seas, they have the same mind, the same principle; sages appear in the Western Seas, they have the same mind, the same principle" 東海有聖

The inclusionist tendencies of this thinking are obviously useful to those who seek to demonstrate that their own thinking is not alien to mainstream Chinese literati thought. But although Chinese Christians and Chinese Muslims alike found concepts such as those expressed by Lu Jiuyuan inviting, they made different use of them.

Standaert explains that Yang Tingyun's interest in Lu Jiuyuan's formulation lies in its emphatic assertion that one can follow "the Westerners without acting contrary to the Way of [the Sages]." The Christian use of Lu Jiuyuan is intended first and foremost to demonstrate the mutual compatibility of Confucian and Christian thought. Similarly, by Standaert's interpretation, Chinese Christians took Lu Jiuyuan's discussion of the sages as an invitation to understand their teaching ("the Way of the foreigners") as being "the same as the Way of the Ancient Chinese Saints and Sages."

In the Muslim interpretation of Lu Jiuyuan (and of other writers who strike an inclusionist tone), however, Islam is not simply a tradition that is not contrary to or even the same as the tradition of the ancient sages; rather, it is *an essential part of* that tradition. The difference is a matter of degree. Christians aimed to show that their teaching was not contradictory (and thus not threatening) to Confucian tradition; Muslims to show that their teaching was a part of that tradition. Chinese Christians positioned their thought as the same as the Way of the Sages; Chinese Muslims went one step further, by portraying their great teachers, Muhammad foremost among them, as being sages themselves.

Standaert himself hints at this method of aligning Confucianism with other traditions in the Chinese Christian context by pointing out that Chinese Christians may, through such passages as that of Lu Jiuyuan, come to see Jesus as one link in a chain of sages. Of Yang Tingyun, he writes: "For [him], Jesus Christ, who was born to redeem sin, was a revelation of grace by the Master of Heaven, in succession of the earlier transmitters of the Orthodoxy, such as other prophets in the West, and Yao, Shun, the Duke of Zhou and

人出焉此心同也此理同也西海有聖人出焉此心同也此理同也; see Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 201n59. I have found more than fifteen different versions of these two passages in Chinese Islamic texts.

Confucius in the East.”⁸ But whereas Standaert’s observation is based on his extension of Yang Tingyun’s argument (and it appears justified), many Chinese Muslim scholars explicitly declared that Muhammad was himself a sage. In so doing, these scholars placed Muhammad squarely within the ideological and temporal spectrum of Confucian thought. He and his teachings were not merely harmonious with Confucianism; they were an essential component of the totality of the Dao.

Finally, whereas Chinese Christians were concerned with aligning their “foreign” teaching with Chinese thought, Chinese Muslims sought to demonstrate that their thought was not, in fact, foreign at all. Again, the Christian and Muslim strategies are similar but differ in degree and intensity. Chinese Christian scholars created a space for (foreign) Christian thought alongside (indigenous) Confucianism, but Chinese Muslim scholars made room for Muhammad, and thus for Islam as a whole, *within* Confucian tradition itself. Christianity always was understood as foreign, even by Chinese Christians themselves; in contrast, Chinese Muslim literati perceived their Dao, despite its origins in the West (西方 or 西域), as ultimately Chinese. Islam itself was western, but the scholarly tradition of which they were a part was distinctly Chinese.

A number of reasons lie behind such differences; many of these deserve lengthy study in their own right and cannot be discussed here at any length. They include the history of Christian missionary activity in China; the very fact that the proselytizers were Europeans underscored the imported nature of Christianity. Like many of his colleagues, Matteo Ricci, for example, pitched himself to would-be converts as specifically foreign. As one recent study suggests, Ricci and others purposely promoted themselves as “Western Sages,” thus fitting themselves into a category “already prepared for [them] in the Chinese intellectual arena.”⁹ Obviously “Western Sages” or “Western scholars” 西儒 would initially have been a useful categorization for Christian missionaries; by using

8. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 201.

9. Qiong Zhang, “Cultural Accommodation or Intellectual Colonization?,” p. 74.

the categories by which Chinese understood them, these missionaries would more readily have been able to render themselves intelligible in their new cultural context. But what initially was a positive prism for interpretation later, it seems, served to render Chinese Christians always somewhat removed from Chinese society.

Islam appeared in China for an array of different reasons and was never based in the same way on notions of difference and alienness. More important, in terms of having a significant communal presence in China, it had a longer history. Muslims could look back centuries and see Chinese families and lineages as their heritage. The striking lack of and even hostility toward proselytizing in the Chinese Muslim context also serves to elide apparent conflict or competition between Islam and dominant Chinese thought (at least in Muslim eyes). An emphasis on conversion is implicitly based on notions of the superiority of one tradition or belief system over another. Christianity, as a result of its basis in missionary and other proselytizing activity, was in a sense put on the defensive in the Chinese cultural context in a way that Islam was not.

The dynamics of reconciling, on one hand, Christianity and Chineseness and, on the other, Islam and Chineseness were thus comparable but worked in opposite directions. Christianity, from the very start and largely as a result of its missionary origins, presented China with the challenge of understanding Christianity, a task accomplished through the application of Chinese categories to a foreign entity.¹⁰ Would-be converts first made sense of Christianity through Chinese categories and then converted. The process by its very nature was a binary or, at the very least, dialogic one, between two separate entities, one “Chinese” and one “foreign.”

In contrast, Chinese Islam had never configured the relationship between China and Islam as oppositional. Chinese Muslims were natives of China and saw themselves as part of its landscape. As we shall see, they considered their history part of Chinese history. When the Chinese and European missionaries themselves made use of Chinese categories to understand Christianity, they were en-

10. Grafton and Goodman, “Ricci, the Chinese, and the Toolkits of Textualists,” pp. 95–148.

gaged in a reconciliatory endeavor.¹¹ When Chinese Muslims made use of Chinese categories to understand their tradition, they were instead demonstrating what they took as the flexibility of cultural categories, Muslim and Chinese—categories that to them were in fact so flexible that there was no need for reconciliation. The Muslims themselves were concerned with interpreting themselves and their tradition against the backdrop of Chinese culture, as a means of understanding the “reality” of being both Muslim and Chinese. Christian Chinese, newcomers to a faith, on the other hand, had to reassure themselves, and the society of which they were a part, that their aims were not in opposition to those of the majority.

Perhaps the single most important factor contributing to the different Christian and Muslim interpretations of passages such as that of Lu Jiuyuan was the presence among Muslims of the indigenous educational apparatus. The widespread and complex Chinese Muslim educational system gave Chinese Muslim thinkers a powerful sense of themselves as members of a community of knowledge, tied together by familial, geographic, and pedagogical ties, which behaved according to the norms of Confucian literati society. To put it simply, they saw themselves as part of an established “native” school because they *could*. Their loyalty as Muslims to Muhammad’s teachings was expressed and reinforced through Confucian norms and values. This loyalty to Muhammad’s teaching was not a *choice of faith*, but a matter of genealogical—familial and pedagogical—heritage to which, as good Confucians, they were committed. Furthermore, whereas Christians had to rely on the content and meaning of their teachings to find compatibilities with the dominant intellectual society, Muslims could depend also on the *form* their teaching took. This form—the educational network itself—was one that further underscored their sense of themselves as true members of Chinese literati culture.

The belief in Chinese tradition that the transmission of knowledge relied on a series of sages allowed for the incorporation of Chinese Muslim scholarly tradition. Moreover, the patterning of

11. See, among others, Rule, *K’ung-Tzu or Confucius*; Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*.

the Chinese Muslim educational system with its complex links between scholars in different locations and generations was imitative of such notions of the transmission of knowledge. It is in the context of this network that the depiction of Muhammad as a sage had its strongest resonances.

Muhammad, the Chinese Sage

The portrayal of Muhammad as a sage or righteous ruler accomplished two significant things. First, it made Muhammad a part of Chinese tradition and rendered him a culturally intelligible figure in the interpretive categories of Han society. Again, as Standaert points out, this was, to an extent, a strategy also used by Chinese Christian thinkers to make sense of Jesus. Second, the depiction of Muhammad as a sage or righteous ruler rendered him not merely an acceptable object of study but a necessary one. Islam thus became the study of “the Dao of Muhammad,” one component of the Dao with which *all* Chinese scholars were concerned and hence a legitimate component of late imperial Chinese intellectual discourse.

Islam, then, was viewed not as a foreign knowledge “compatible with” Chinese knowledge but as part of knowledge itself. The initially surprising fact that Chinese Muslim intellectuals never portrayed Islam as a religion of revelation becomes entirely logical in light of this view of Muhammad. Muhammad, rather than being the means of transmission of the divine Word, is instead a “sage”—the original sage. Chinese Muslim scholars and teachers have as their duty the ongoing transmission and development (or cultivation) of the Dao first taught by the founder of Islam. In short, the quintessential category of the Muslim world—the prophet—is in the Chinese Muslim instance converted into the quintessential category of China’s intellectual elite—the sage.

In the preface to *Kelimo jie* 克里默解 (Explication of *Kalām*; dated 1631), Zhang Junshi briefly discussed the origins of Islam, of its founder, and, most significant, Muhammad’s status as “sage.” He opened with a general statement regarding sagehood: “The sages of Southern and Northern Seas have the same mind and also have the same principle” 南北海之聖人有同心亦有同理. Zhang

was here making use of Lu Jiuyuan, although he did not mention him by name. He then presented Islam: "Our teaching is transmitted from the west, and its whole mind is transmitted [by] several [written] words [i.e., books] like this one classic, *Explication of Kalām*" 吾教傳自西方亦具心傳數字如克里默解一經是矣.¹²

Zhang Junshi presented Muhammad as the "sage" (*shengren*) whose "conduct" (*xing* 行) must be followed by the Muslims (須循聖行). "What the sage did, we do; what the sage forbade, we forbid" 聖人之所爲吾爲之聖人之所禁吾禁之.¹³ Lest the parallel be lost on his reader, Zhang explained explicitly that this is exactly akin to following the conduct of Yao and Shun, the great legendary Chinese sage-kings whose behavior and conduct became a model for subsequent generations.¹⁴

Interestingly, in the Muslim world the tradition of *hadith* and *hadith* interpretation provides, in theory at least, the basis for *all* aspects of Muslim conduct, but Chinese Muslim scholars did not invoke these *hadith* traditions of the Prophet as the basis for behavior and conduct. Instead, they more readily used the notion that Muhammad was a sage as the reason for emulating his conduct. In both approaches Muhammad is to be emulated. But whereas the ideology behind *hadith* (which is termed, significantly, *shengyu* 聖諭)¹⁵ is that Muhammad is to be imitated because he is the Prophet, the reasoning behind Chinese Muslim interpretations is that Muhammad is to be imitated because he is a sage, and sages, in Chinese tradition, are figures worthy of emulation. Muhammad is not "like" a sage, or "equal to" the sages; he *is* a sage, counted among the others.

In later texts, particularly, this theme of Muhammad as a sage is common and is developed in a more explicit and elaborate way.

12. Zhang Zhong, "Kelimo jie xu" (Preface to the *Kelimo*), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 213.

13. Ibid.

14. In the second volume of *Kelimo*, Zhang put it simply and explicitly: "Muhammad [should be] translated 'Most Sagely'" 穆罕默德譯曰至聖 (Zhang Zhong [Zhang Junshi], *Kelimo jie*, in *HRZ [(Qingdai)]*, p. 221).

15. The term, which in a non-Muslim Chinese context means "imperial edict," was used in the Chinese educational system at least as early as the mid-sixteenth century.

Most of the greetings to Ma Zhu's *Guide to Islam* refer to Muhammad as a sage. For example, Li Yanling, the Chinese Muslim teacher from Jining, depicted Muhammad in a poem as "the sage Muhammad, who was born in Mecca" 聖人出在天方, whose teaching "flows toward [and fills] the four seas" 四海向中流.¹⁶ Similar references appear repeatedly throughout the huge number of poems composed by Chinese Muslim poets for the occasion of the publication of Ma Zhu's *Guide*.¹⁷

Ding Peng 丁澎 (fl. 1650–1695), a native of Hangzhou and a prolific poet,¹⁸ for example, claimed that Confucius spoke in his teachings of "a sage who comes from the West."¹⁹ According to Ding, "First there was Adam, who knew the word of God. But then his [Adam's] message was gradually distorted. Superior people could not conduct themselves according to his Dao 上之人不能行其道, and inferior people could not follow his teaching 下之人不能率其教. Therefore, Muhammad the sage rose up in all lands of the west in order to rectify and clarify, explain and spread, the Dao of the sages" 於是聖人起而修明之群土西方闡揚聖道.²⁰

For those readers unable to see the implications of this narrative, Ding concluded by saying that Confucius' words referred directly to Muhammad (西方有聖人焉孔子嘗言之).²¹ The accuracy of Ding's claim about Confucius is not of immediate relevance. What mattered to Ding was that Confucius—the ultimate sage, the sage of all sages—spoke of Muhammad as a sage, thus giving him the ultimate stamp, as it were, of sagehood. Whereas Ma validated his depiction of Muhammad as a sage by grounding it in the actions of Chinese emperors, Ding found greater validation still in linking

16. Li Yanling, "Zengyan," in *HRZ (Qingdai)* p. 351; also in *QZZN*, p. 17.

17. These were Ma Yanrui, Ma Zhiqi, Huangfu Jing, and Cai Haoming. All poems praised the "sage who comes from the west"; see *HRZ (Qingdai)* pp. 352–56; also *QZZN*, pp. 16–19.

18. See Ding's biography in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 135–36.

19. Ding Peng, "Jiaokuan jielun xu" (Preface to the *Jiaokuan jielun*), dated 1691, in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 235.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 234. The same claim is also made by an earlier writer, Liang Yijun 梁以俊 (fl. 1640s–60s), in his preface to Wang Daiyu's *Qingzhen zhengquan*; see Liang Yijun, "Xu" (Preface), in *ZQX*, p. 2.

Muhammad to Confucius and his teachings in the most direct of ways.

In 1732, another Chinese Muslim author, Sun Ke'an (fl. 1700–1730) of Hangzhou, prefaced his *Qingzhen jiaokao* 清真教考 (Investigation of Islamic teachings) with a reference to the oft-cited passage by Lu Jiuyuan.²² Sun's book was not about Muhammad or about Islam per se. Rather, it was a compilation of information about Islamic lands collected from Chinese sources. The reference to Lu Jiuyuan was intended to imply that sagehood was not tied to a specific location. Just as the Chinese lands produced sages, the lands of the west did, as well. Sun's preface begins: "Sages appear in the Eastern Seas, their mind and their principle are the same; Sages appear in the Western Seas, their mind and their principle are the same. The sage of our teaching was born in Arabia; his principle and his teaching are lofty" 東海有聖人出焉此心同此理同也西海有聖人出焉此心同此理同也吾教聖人生於天方國其理其教峻.²³

Countless examples of the Chinese Muslim interpretation of Muhammad as a sage can be found. To provide but a few more: in 1775, Sai Yu 賽嶼 (1697–1795), *juren* of 1729, wrote: "Regarding Islam's sage—his Dao is the greatest, his teaching is the most proper, his merit is the most refined" 夫聖人之道至大聖人之學至正聖人之功至精.²⁴ Sai Yu then equated Muhammad with the ancient sages who provided a model for proper conduct. In order to clarify what he meant by "sage," Sai Yu provided a list of the sages, a list that consists of Chinese (Confucian) figures: Fu Xi, Shen Nong, Huang Di, Yao, Shun, Yu, King Wen, King Wu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius. Muhammad, Sai Yu implied, rightfully belongs on this list. Finally, quoting the *Mengzi*, Sai Yu described Confucius' great accomplishment as "integrating the Way" 集大成—that is, as the culmination of the completion of the Way.

In this schema, Muhammad—whose Dao is the greatest, whose teaching the most accurate, and whose merit the most refined—has an analogous role within the development of this Dao. That is, he

22. Sun Ke'an, *Qingzhenjiao kao*.

23. Sun Ke'an, "Zixu" 自序 (Author's introduction), in *ibid.*, 1a–b.

24. Sai Yu, "*Zhisheng shilu xu*" (Introduction to the *Zhisheng shilu*), dated 1775, in *HRZ (Qingdai)* p. 225.

is its "great completer."²⁵ This interpretation of Islam is one that follows naturally, and indeed is in many ways contingent on, the depiction and understanding of Muhammad as a sage, as that category was understood by Chinese cultural tradition.

The depiction of Muhammad as a sage whose actions are the culmination of the completion of the Islamic Dao is laid out most systematically in Yuan Guozuo's preface to Liu Zhi's biography of Muhammad, the *Zhisheng shilu*, first published in 1779. Yuan's 1778 introduction provides a detailed elaboration of Muhammad's role as sage, opening with a direct reference to Mencius. "Mencius said: 'Shun, an Eastern barbarian, [and] King Wen, a Western barbarian, conducted China [like two matching] parts of one tally.'" 孟子曰舜東夷之人文王西夷之人行中國若合符節.²⁶

The passage in the *Mencius* reads:

Mencius said, 'Shun, was an Eastern barbarian; he was born in Chu Feng, moved to Fu Hsia, and died at Mingtiao. King Wen, was a Western barbarian; he was born in Mount Ch'i Chou and died at Pi Ying. Their native places were over a thousand *li* apart, and there were a thousand years between them. Yet when they had their way in the Central Kingdoms, their actions matched like two halves of a tally. The standards of the two sages, one earlier and one later, were identical.'²⁷

Yuan could safely assume that any literate person in China would know the passage in its entirety. His interest here was in demonstrating that if Mencius—a major figure in the history of the transmission of Confucian thought—could so easily state that a western barbarian (i.e., non-Chinese) leader is on a par with the sages of the east, then surely, by parallel reasoning, Muhammad,

25. Ibid.

26. Yuan Guozuo, "Zhisheng shilu xu" (Introduction to the *Zhisheng shilu*), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 226.

27. The translation cited here is taken from D. C. Lau's translation of *Mencius*, p. 128. David Hinton translates the passage as follows: "Mencius said: 'Emperor Shun was a barbarian from the east: he was born in Chu Feng, moved to Fu Hsia, and finally died in Ming T'iao. Emperor Wen was a barbarian from the west: he was born in Ch'i Chou and died in Pi Ying. They lived more than thousand miles and a thousand years apart—putting their principles into practice throughout the Middle Kingdom, they were like the matching halves of a jade seal. The first was a sage, and the second was a sage: their thoughts were identical.'" (*Mencius*, p. 141).

too, can likewise be understood as the equal of the sages of Chinese tradition. Yuan continued with another quote, the by-now familiar passage from Lu Jiuyuan.

Mr. Lu says, "Sages appear in the Eastern Seas; they have the same mind, the same principle. Sages appear in the Western Seas; they have the same mind, the same principle. Accordingly, sages from the Southern and Northern Seas appear, [and] their minds and their principles are the same; even though they are very distant in time, they are not different."²⁸

In making use of these passages Yuan laid the groundwork for the main argument of his preface: expanses of space and time should not be regarded as obstacles to attaining sagehood. That is, just as people who are at a huge historical remove can be remembered as sages, so, too, can those whose origins are geographically distant from China.

When we consider this [i.e., what Lu and Mengzi said], we know that a sage is of the kind [borne] by auspicious circumstances. When he [i.e. the sage] comes in accordance with Heaven[ly timing], he realizes [verifies what heaven had conferred]; when he precedes Heaven[ly timing], he fails and deviates. Certainly, [sages] cannot be limited by their locality and region, nor have I heard that they differ [from one another] because of their locality or region.²⁹

Simply put, the category of sagehood has no spatial or chronological boundaries, and the powers a sage enjoys are neither affected nor effected by temporal or spatial considerations. Presumably, then, a sage cannot be discredited on the basis of his origins or the time of his birth. The only factor that matters is that the sage be brought into the world according to heavenly decree. Although specific times can be understood as being more or less "auspicious," auspiciousness is contingent not on human signs but on heavenly ones.

Yuan established this framework entirely on the basis of his reading of Chinese sources. The particular sage with whom he was concerned, however, is Muhammad. Having based his argument on the teachings of that exquisite sage who spent a lifetime discuss-

28. Yuan Guozuo, "*Zhisheng shilu xu*," in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 226.

29. *Ibid.*

ing the merits of Chinese sages, Mencius, Yuan was able convincingly to deter any would-be detractors of Muhammad. "Our Islamic teaching originates from the Western Regions: it began with the ancestor of man, Adam, and was transmitted to the most sagely Muhammad, the great completer of the Dao 我清真教肇自西方起於人祖阿丹傳於至聖穆罕默得道集大成."³⁰

In his choice of words, Yuan echoed the standard Chinese description of Confucius, that is, that he was "the great completer of the Dao." The impact on Yuan's contemporaries of referring to Muhammad in this way cannot be captured through a translation of these four characters. As they would have known, Mencius used the same phrase to portray Confucius and his role vis-à-vis other sages: "Confucius was the one who gathered together all that was good."³¹ David Hinton's recent translation is useful here: "Confucius was a sage who understood for all things their proper time. You could say he gathered the great perfections into a single orchestra—everything from resounding bells to rustling chimes of jade."³²

This discussion of Confucius appears in a dialogue between Mencius and an unnamed aristocrat regarding the nature of sagehood. Mencius discussed several sages, specifying what made each one great. Confucius is characterized by *two* greatnesses. First, everything he did was *timely*; second, he joined all good things into one single harmonious whole. Confucius' sagehood, then, was a matter of time. His actions were timely, and all the "great perfections" achieved by previous sages were available to him to gather and orchestrate. The full passage reads:

Mencius added, Po Yi was the sage who was unsullied; Yi Yin was the sage who accepted responsibility; Liu Hsia was the sage who was easy-going; Confucius was the sage whose actions were timely. Confucius was the one gathered together all that was good. To do this is to open with bells and conclude with jade tubes. To open with bells is to begin in orderly fashion; to conclude with jade tubes is to end in orderly fashion. To begin in an orderly fashion is the concern of the wise while to end in an orderly fashion is the concern of the sage. Wisdom is like skill, shall I say,

30. Ibid.

31. *Mencius* (Lau trans.), p. 150.

32. *Mencius* (Hinton trans.), pp. 180–81.

while sageness is like strength. It is like shooting beyond a hundred paces. It is due to your strength that the arrow reaches the target, but it not due to your strength that it hits the mark.³³

By alluding to this passage from Mencius, Yuan in effect averred that Confucius' relationship to the Dao of Confucianism is equivalent to Muhammad's relationship to his Dao (Islam), that the two figures enjoy the same sagely status. The very terms Yuan used would have reminded his readers of Confucius. As Wilson notes, *zhisheng* 至聖 (most sagely) and *dacheng* 大成 (great completer) became part of Confucius' posthumous title during the early Qing.³⁴

Here we see most clearly the ways in which the depiction of Muhammad as a sage led directly to, and provided the foundation for, a portrayal of Islam as a "Dao" rather than as a confessional or revelatory belief system. Accordingly, Muhammad as the "completer," who at once also embodies the "completer of the Dao" is portrayed as a just ruler, in accord with Confucian norms. Muhammad accomplished all this even though he was ignorant of the models set by the sage-kings or the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. Yuan emphasized that Muhammad "did not follow the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, but his disposition was upright and his principle was pure." Yuan was not apologizing for Muhammad's lack of knowledge of Confucius and Mencius but subtly implying that Islam's Most Sagely *did not need* such knowledge. This point is crucial from the Chinese Muslim vantage point: had Muhammad known of Confucius and Mencius, his teaching would be a mere subset of *their* Dao or, worse, a *deviation* from their Dao. Instead, this (independent) Dao of Muhammad's is compatible with Chinese norms and ethics and, therefore, civilized.

Yuan continued:

He [Muhammad] enforced the [proper] conduct between ruler and minister, father and son; he diffused the doctrines of Humanity, Compassion, proper behavior, and politeness. He did not follow the footsteps of Yao

33. *Mencius* (Lau trans.) pp. 150–51.

34. In 1645, the full title was, in Wilson's translation, "Great Completer, Supreme Sage, Exalted First Master" (*dacheng zhisheng wenxuan xianshi* 大成至聖文宣先師). In 1657, this was simplified to *zhisheng xianshi*; see Wilson, "Ritualizing Confucius," p. 57.

and Shun, yet he ruled [in a way so as to] bring peace, and he made the people happy. He did not follow the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, yet his disposition was upright and his principle pure” 不襲唐虞之跡而政康民樂不沿孔孟之說而性正理醇.³⁵

Again, Yuan emphasized that Muhammad behaved correctly without the benefit of knowing the sages of Chinese antiquity.

Once again, Yuan sought to dissociate sagehood from geographic and chronological boundaries. The fact that Muhammad not part of the lineage of Confucius and Mencius does not invalidate his status as sage. Just as the timing of a sage's birth is determined by the inscrutable edict of Heaven, the intellectual qualities of the sage are in some sense inherent, determined by the “principle” of the individual in question. In accordance with Lu Jiuyuan's assertion, Muhammad, like his Chinese colleagues, had the mind and principle of a sage.

Muhammad is introduced and integrated into this category just as Islam—his Dao—is introduced and integrated into China. And just as Muhammad thus becomes a sage, Islam becomes a Dao and a part of Chinese thought. Specifically, Islam becomes a part of the distinct portion of Chinese thought produced, preserved, and disseminated by Chinese Muslim scholars—the Dao of Islam—a constituent of the greater Dao comprising all scholarly knowledge.

Yuan's observation that Muhammad did not follow the teachings of Confucius and Mencius yet nevertheless ruled in accordance with their principles is a nuanced way of situating Muhammad vis-à-vis Confucius and the other sages. Yuan simultaneously affirmed Muhammad's distinctiveness (his Dao was independent of theirs) and validated the teachings of the sages—in fact, Muhammad proves their worthiness (“yet he ruled peacefully and brought happiness and harmony to the people”; i.e., he ruled as the Chinese sages prescribe). In other words, Yuan upheld the validity of Confucian teachings by establishing the validity of Muhammad's claim to sagehood on the basis on Confucian principles. At the same time, he asserted Muhammad's uniqueness.

35. Yuan Guozuo, “*Zhisheng shilu xu*,” in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 226.

Here, then, we see a most interesting dynamic. Rather than viewing Muhammad's geographic and genealogical remove from the Chinese sages as a potential liability, this very remove becomes the precise grounds for Yuan's argument for Muhammad's greatness. It is not that Muhammad's sagely rule compensates for his ignorance of the Chinese sages. Instead, the fact that Muhammad stands outside the lineage of Chinese sages makes his claim to sagehood all the more incontrovertible; he, like they, ruled in accordance with sagely principles.

Again, this is a subtle and complicated (and not wholly uncontradictory) strategy. It was one, however, that provided Yuan and an array of other Chinese Muslim thinkers with a means of creating a distinct but integral space for Muhammad within Chinese cultural discourse. It is a tactic through which Yuan managed to portray the distinctive sense of simultaneous difference and sameness that characterized Chinese Muslim literati self-perception in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the educational network reached its peak.

The quintessential depiction of Muhammad as a sage appears, not surprisingly, in Liu Zhi's biography of the prophet, the *Zhisheng shilu*. In his introduction to the book, Liu wrote: "This book, *The Veritable Records of the Most Sagely [of Islam]*, chronicles in Arabic the life of the sage Muhammad, whose ancestor was Adam."³⁶ He then distinguished four types of sages: common sages; respected sages; great sages; and supreme or "most sagely" sages (聖復有列聖欽聖大聖至聖).³⁷ Muhammad, as the title of Liu's book indicates, belongs in the fourth, and highest, category. Muhammad is the sole figure in the work to be assigned to a specific category.

In stating that Muhammad's status as sage is "supreme," he was not implying that there might not be other sages in this same category. Nor did he name any figures in the other three categories. Needless to say, this is an effort on Liu's part to forestall the claim that as a sage Muhammad outranks Chinese sages. The author concluded by urging his readers to "study" the sage Muhammad, to

36. Liu Zhi, "Zhisheng shilu xu" 至聖實錄序 (Introduction to the *Zhisheng shilu*), dated 1710, in idem, *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* (1984), 1a.

37. Ibid.

“take this study very seriously, and to practice what he advocates earnestly” 學聖人者持躬任道.³⁸ If this is done, then one’s “thought will be complete and one will attain a status not shared by others.” “We should,” Liu concludes, “make this biography our mirror” 思底於有成位追於無上當以是緣爲明鑒焉.³⁹

The study advocated by Liu is, specifically, the study of the Dao of Muhammad. The interpretation of Muhammad and his teachings as constituting a Dao goes hand in hand with the depiction of Muhammad as a sage. Through these two parallel themes, Chinese Muslim scholars made room for Muhammad and for their body of knowledge within Chinese literati culture.

*Chinese Muslim Scholarship
as the Study of Muhammad’s Dao*

In arguing that Muhammad was a sage according to Confucian standards Chinese Muslim scholars were not seeking to establish their own “truth” in a way that would exclude or invalidate Confucius and the Confucian sages and their teachings. The point here was to present Muhammad and his teachings not as an abrogation of earlier sages and their teachings but as a continuation and perhaps as a “completion” of them. Similarly, the body of Chinese Muslim knowledge in general—knowledge of Muhammad’s Dao—was presented as part of the total body of Chinese intellectual thought and, in the case of Chinese literati of Muslim ancestry, a vital part of that total. Chinese Muslims thus managed to view themselves as both Chinese literati and Muslims. Or, better put, they viewed the two as overlapping and in no way contradictory categories. Simultaneously, they understood themselves through the categories of the dominant elite culture and preserved the unique body of knowledge of which they were the custodians and developers. Chinese Muslim literati of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries regarded the preservation and the codification of their knowledge as the single most important activity through which they could both express and consolidate their identity.

38. Ibid., 2a.

39. Ibid.

This construction requires some elaboration. By stating that the teachings of Muhammad constituted a Dao (the Dao that was Islam itself), Chinese Muslim scholars were not, of course, suggesting that *all* Chinese scholars ought to be well versed in Islamic knowledge (although some scholars did, in fact, imply just that). Rather, they were instructing their own constituency that a Chinese Muslim, as a good Chinese literatus, should specialize in the teachings of Muhammad. The message to the broader literati community was that Chinese Muslim intellectuals were, like the elite in general, studying a Dao. The point was that Chinese Muslim scholars were literati and that they were engaged in an activity familiar to, and recognized as legitimate by, the mainstream elite.

That is, Chinese Muslim scholars were interested in instructing their constituency on the proper focus for their studies even as they aimed to demonstrate to those outside their constituency that their activities were those of the literati class. Paradoxical as it might seem, what Chinese Muslim scholars were doing by portraying Islam as a Dao was telling their students, in effect, that as Muslims the way to be a good Confucian was to study the Dao—the Dao of Islam. The apparent paradox of this stance disappears, however, with the evidence provided us by the Chinese Muslim educational system that its scholars understood themselves as literati, viewed their greatest intellectual ancestor as a sage, understood his teaching as a Dao, and patterned themselves as a school.

The interpretation of Muhammad as a sage and of Islam as his Dao integrated Islam and its Prophet into the cultural paradigms of the early Qing period. Chinese Muslim scholars still, however, had to account for the presence of Islam on Chinese soil. The story of Islam's origins in China was also told in such a way as to integrate it into Chinese social and cultural categories.

One example of this effort is the *Qing bao biao* 請褒表 (Statement requesting praise) of Ma Zhu, one of two texts Ma composed with the intention of presenting them to the Kangxi emperor. Both are included in the first volume of his *Qingzhen zhinan*.⁴⁰ In the *Qing bao biao*, Ma provided the emperor a history of Islam in China. Ma opened with an account of his noble origins and ex-

40. Ma Zhu, *Qing bao biao*, in QZZN, pp. 26–28.

plains that he was descended from the sage Muhammad, the “western sage” (*xiyu zhisheng muhanmode* 西域至聖穆罕默得).⁴¹ Assuming that the emperor’s knowledge of Islamic history was limited, Ma explained that Muhammad is associated with two major documents, the *Qur’an* and *hadith*. The two works “total 30 codices,” which mark the “great completion of the Dao.” Together these 30 books “contain what former sages produced in 113 classics” and are the “culmination of the achievements of the ten thousand generations of former sages” 冊僅三十自包括前聖一白一十三部真經道集大成功勳萬世.⁴²

The phrase “completion of the Dao,” or “perfection of the Dao,” is intended as a reference to a process of creating and accumulating knowledge. As used here, it indicates the books produced through or by Muhammad—the *Qur’an* and *hadith*, respectively. The concept of Muhammad as the “culmination” or “completion” of the Dao is meant quite literally—he is not simply the capstone in a long series of sages (and thus in some metaphoric sense their “culmination”). More important, he is also the producer of literatures that are a literal culmination and completion of all previously recorded knowledge. In this light the Dao becomes a process of scholarly literary production, and Islam the specific scholarly tradition that encapsulates all prior literary productivity.

Ma Zhu was probably the first to use the term “completer of the Dao” within the Chinese Muslim context. His deployment of it—to link Muhammad with scholarly activity and to portray the Dao as associated with the specifically academic activities of study and writing—was tied to the Chinese Muslim interpretation of Islam as first and foremost an intellectual body of knowledge. Just as mosques were understood primarily as loci for study, Muhammad himself was seen primarily as a scholar and writer. Islam is seen, then, as a Dao—a body of knowledge. Ma’s depiction of Muhammad as the “great completion [or completer] of the Dao” and as the ultimate source of Islamic knowledge allowed him to claim that the Muslim literary tradition is the summation and culmination of all that preceded Muhammad. This interpretation—which is in ac-

41. Ibid., p. 26.

42. Ibid. Sai Yu and Ding Peng (see above) also used similar argumentation.

cordance with Islamic interpretation of Muhammad's status vis-à-vis earlier prophets—rendered Chinese Muslim scholarship an activity of central importance to Chinese society in general and, conceptually at least, turned the Chinese Muslim educational network into a respectable and respectful Chinese scholarly institution subscribing to a body of knowledge traceable to antiquity.

Yuan Guozuo, who wrote about a hundred years after Ma Zhu, did not stress the literary tradition but instead emphasized the sage and his actions. He considered Muhammad himself to be the culmination of the Dao in the sense that in his being and in his actions he most perfectly embodied it. To learn the Dao, by this interpretation, one must follow the ways of Muhammad. For both Yuan and Ma, however, Islam is the Dao. The depiction is at variance with Qur'anic understandings of the connections between Muhammad and his teachings and "Islam."

The position of the Qur'an is that Muhammad is the last and greatest in a fifty-man chain of prophets, running from Adam through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus to Muhammad.⁴³ Each individual in the chain, according to the Qur'an, had greater prophetic powers than his predecessors. Central in this chain is the unifying concept of prophecy, the miraculous process through which God reveals His word to man. Essential to prophecy as it is portrayed in the Qur'an is the fully human status of the prophet and the prophet's complete dependence on God for all that is learned as a result of revelation. For example, lest people attribute Muhammad's knowledge to prior scholarly learning, the Qur'an emphasizes that he was illiterate at the time of his first encounter with the Archangel Gabriel. The Qur'an in fact insists that all books of revelation (the Qur'an and its antecedents) were handed down *in toto* from Heaven.⁴⁴

These interpretations of prophecy and textual production differ dramatically from those of Chinese Muslim scholars. In the Chinese Muslim context, Muhammad remains central but not as a prophet. Rather, he is a sage, one in a chain marked by the gradual

43. See Qur'an: Surat Al Anbiya' (The Prophets).

44. See Qur'an: Surat Al Baqara (The Cow). See also Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, pp. 1-30.

completion of the Dao. Texts, in the Chinese Muslim context, are produced by scholars, whose scholarly production both reflects and contributes to the Dao.

According to Ma's history of the origins of Islam in China, Islam "flowed" into the Eastern Land⁴⁵ (a term for China used by other Chinese Muslim scholars as well)⁴⁶ during the Sui dynasty (隋開皇中其教始流東土).⁴⁷ He narrates that during the Zhenquan era (785–805) of the Tang dynasty, the emperor "praised Islam and ordered the building of a mosque in Chang'an [Xi'an]" 唐貞觀年詔蒙表贊建寺長安.⁴⁸ Between 1068 and 1077, during the Song dynasty, the king of Bokhara sent a tribute mission with teachers led by one Sufeier, a descendant of Muhammad (and ostensibly an ancestor of Ma Zhu) to China.⁴⁹ Ever since, according to Ma, Muslims have occupied themselves with building mosques throughout the country and teaching and studying Islam. The account coincides with what we have seen of the origins of the Chinese Muslim educational system, and Ma in fact seems to be documenting its infrastructural development, although pushing its chronological origins back to the moment of Islam's arrival on Chinese soil.

In Ma's description, Islamic activities during the Yuan and the Ming dynasties centered on education.⁵⁰ Throughout the entire narrative, there is no mention of Muslims in China as other than teachers and scholars. Ma created a seamless narrative in which the presence of Islam in China is a natural development resulting from the eastward "flow" (*liu* 流) of the Dao. This narrative thus provides a framework for Ma's work itself—his scholarly activity is only the continuation of an activity carried out by Muslims in

45. Liang Yijun (see above) was probably the first to express the idea of Islam "being handed down" 流傳 into China. This term suggests that it was a recognized tradition. Liang's exact words are: 隋唐之際始流傳於東土非隋唐以前無清真教也 (Liang Yijun, "Xu," in ZQX, p. 2). Ma Zhu's "flow" (流) could thus be read as "handed down" (as a part of 流傳).

46. See, e.g., JXCP, p. 55.

47. Ma Zhu, *Qing bao biao*, in QZZN, p. 26. This dating (between 589 and 601) is impossible, for Muhammad began his activities between 612 and 622.

48. Ma Zhu, *Qing bao biao*, in QZZN, p. 26.

49. Ma is relying on a folk Chinese Muslim tradition about a man named Sofeier who came to China during the Song period and served as a teacher of Islam.

50. Ma Zhu, *Qing bao biao*, in QZZN, pp. 26–27.

China for more than a thousand years. Finally, if Chinese Muslim scholarly activity did not find enough validation in this invocation of ancient tradition and its participation in the completion of the Dao, Ma cemented his position regarding Islam by highlighting previous emperors' esteem for it and their role in the founding of Islamic institutions. Since Ma's work was addressed to the Qing emperor, imperial sponsorship loomed large in his work.

Ma concluded by repeating the familiar Chinese Islamic position that Islam and the teachings of Confucianism are similar because "both are the teachings of sages aimed at relieving the people and bringing peace" 真與東魯聖學並濟環宇洪名. Ma petitioned the emperor to read the book that he is humbly presenting 賜全覽爲此具本謹奏聞.⁵¹ Through a clever reworking of the Qur'anic categories of prophecy and book into the Chinese ones of sage and scholarship, Ma produced a document that the emperor was likely to find intelligible, if not convincing. That the Manchus were themselves at the time negotiating their own identity vis-à-vis Chinese culture would only have heightened the text's potential relevance.

Further elaboration on the Chinese Muslim interpretation of Islam as Dao can be found in Ma Zhu's *Guide to Islam*. Ma, like most Chinese Muslim scholars, identified Muhammad as a sage. In his introduction to the work, Ma declared: "In the spring of 742, the Tang Tianbao emperor 天寶 [i.e., Xuanzong r. 742–55] expressed his opinion that the Dao of the Western Sage [Muhammad] and the Dao of the Chinese sages are identical" 唐天寶元年春上以爲西域聖人之道同於中國之道.⁵² Such was also the opinion, according to Ma Zhu, of the founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋, r. 1368–98). "When Zhu Yuanzhang first marched into Beijing, he found 'up to one hundred' books and classics." These were, explains Ma, "written by Islam's ancient sages." Subsequently, "the first Ming emperor . . . ordered the [Muslim] Hanlin scholars Ma Shayihe [Shaykh Ma] and Ma Hamo [Mahmud] to translate these classics."⁵³ According to Ma, the emperor declared that the teach-

51. Ibid., p. 27.

52. Ma Zhu, "Zhinan xu" (Introduction to the *Guide*), in QZZN, p. 13.

53. The full text reads: 明洪武初大將入都得秘藏之書十百冊乃天方先聖人之遺典東土無解其文者命馬沙亦黑馬哈摩譯之 (ibid., p. 14).

ings of the sage Muhammad should be recorded and preserved for later generations.

Although Ma's account of the Tang Xuanzong's acknowledgment of Muhammad as a sage is certainly apocryphal, his mention of the Ming emperor's desire to codify Islamic knowledge is at least somewhat close to the historical record. We know from the *Ming History* that the Hongwu emperor did in fact order a Shaykh Ma to translate certain astronomy texts. Clearly, his interest was scientific and technological.

Ma Zhu, however, chose to cast the vignette as an episode in the long history of Chinese emperors' respect for Islamic knowledge in general. The "classics" to which Ma referred, as Ma well knew, were technical and recondite ones and not specifically religious or philosophical. Yet he understood (or at least, portrayed) their translation as an expression of imperial desire to preserve Islamic knowledge as a whole. Ma consolidated this explanation through reference to yet another Ming emperor, Wuzong 武宗 (r. 1506–21), who, according to Ma, ordered the translation of Islamic classics into Chinese, since "none of the Confucian scholars and thinkers knew the teaching of the sages of Islam."⁵⁴

Here again, Ma's account is not far from historical truth, although, as before, Ma used a historical episode to further his own view of Islam. In an early sixteenth-century edict, Wuzong decreed:

The Confucian study can begin things and complete tasks (in society), but it is inadequate for penetrating the Spirit or understanding transformations (of Nature). The study of the Buddhists or Taoists can get close to penetrating the Spirit and understanding transformations, but it cannot comply with Heaven's decree or reach to the truth. The way of each teaching holds one side only. It is only the teaching of the Pure and True [i.e. Islam] which recognizes the Lord and can penetrate to the principle of things. That is why it will last for ten thousand generations.⁵⁵

Ma thus provided what he took to be incontrovertible evidence that Islam, over a long period of time, had been universally recognized in Chinese society as harmonious with, indeed essential to, the totality of knowledge. This vision of the importance of Islamic

54. Ibid.

55. Cited in Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, p. 114.

knowledge takes as its starting point Ma's interpretation of Muhammad as the paramount sage.

As with the construction of Muhammad as sage, examples of the portrayal of Islam as a Dao abound. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the Chinese Muslim scholars who depicted their teaching in this way were officials or degree holders. In 1691 Ding Peng, a Chinese Muslim poet and official (*jinsbi* of 1655; born in Hangzhou),⁵⁶ wrote a preface to a Chinese Islamic text, the *Jiaokuan weilun* 教款微論 (A short discussion of the articles of the teaching, by Mi Wanji 米萬濟 dated ca. 1691).⁵⁷ Ding began with a reference to the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (The doctrine of the mean): "The first verse of the *Zhongyong* says that cultivating the Way [Dao] is called teaching; a teaching that is not cultivated is not clear; a Way that is not taught is not manifested [i.e., is not made known]" 中庸首言修道之謂教教非修不明道非教不著. He then presented Islam, the "Pure and True Correct Teaching" 清真正教, as a philosophical system.⁵⁸ Islam, wrote Ding, "is a Dao whose original soil is in the west, that was refined, clarified, and cultivated by the sage [Muhammad]. . . . It arrived in China, where scholars have erected mosques in which they can study and cultivate its Dao." Ding concluded by saying that "the honorable Master Mi traveled throughout the country and, in order to follow the right Way, wrote the *Jiaokuan jielun*" 迷師敬公遍游海內以行之道所著教款微論.⁵⁹ Writing a book, then, serves to continue the Dao and develop it within China.

Ding's presentation of Islam goes hand in hand with his remarkable understanding of the role and function of the mosque as an institution. No mention, nor even by implication, is made that the mosque's purpose, central or otherwise, is connected with prayer or worship. Mosques, according to Ding, are erected by pious Muslims whose piety is manifest not through the practice of prayer and

56. For Ding's biography and some of his poems, see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 138–42.

57. For details about this text, see Yu Zhengui and Yang Huaizhong, *Zhongguo Yisilan wenxian zhuyi tiyao*, pp. 140–41.

58. Ding, "Jiaokuan weilun xu" (Introduction to the *Jiaokuan*), in *HRZ (Qingdai)* p. 235.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

worship but through the practice of study and the “cultivation of [the Dao of Islam].”

This understanding of the mosque, surprising as it may seem, is entirely in keeping with the ways in which the Chinese Muslim intellectual elite understood Muhammad and the belief system he spawned. For what else, except encourage the scholarly cultivation of a Dao, did a sage do? This depiction of the mosque as primarily a locus for study is directed both to a broader, non-Muslim audience and to gentry Muslim families. Muslim prayer, the quintessential activity at the mosque, would not have been comprehensible to a Han Chinese literati audience, whereas study, as the *Han Kitab* authors described it, was fully intelligible to literati, both Muslim and non-Muslim.⁶⁰

The understanding of Muhammad as a sage led directly to a vision of his teachings as a Dao; the two together upheld scholarship as the most important activity one could pursue. Not surprisingly, then, the mosque emerged as a house for that most important of activities, study. Indeed, the Chinese Muslim educational system was housed in mosques. This does not mean, however, that houses of worship doubled or “moonlighted” as institutions of learning. Rather, learning and scholarship were themselves a form of worship, and mosques (founded, for the most part, by scholars) were the nodes around which the Chinese Muslim educational system coalesced.

Ding strikes a similar theme in an introduction he composed for the *Tianfang shengjiao* 天方聖教 (The teaching of the sage of Islam), a work no longer extant but referred to in Chinese Muslim bibliographies. The introduction has survived and was later included in the twentieth volume of Liu Zhi’s massive *Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam*.⁶¹

The great sage Muhammad . . . was a ruler and a teacher, . . . who was respected among the kings and rulers of the west. . . . Emperor Wen [r. 581–600] of the Sui dynasty admired his influence and sent envoys to the great west in order to obtain his books and classics. Then, in the seventh year

60. I am grateful to Jonathan Lipman for his elucidation of this point.

61. Ding, “*Tianfang sheng xu*” (Introduction to the *Tianfang sheng*), in *HRZ* (Qingdai), pp. 236–37.

of the Kaihuang era [587], the sage [Muhammad] ordered his minister—Saierdi Wan geshi—and others to take with them thirty codices of classics and to transmit them to China, spread them from the southern seas, [and] build temples to the sage where these books could be studied. . . . These books teach about loyalty to rulers and filial piety to parents. . . . They do not differ from our Confucianism.⁶²

A number of important ideas are present in this passage. Once again, the mosque is primarily a site of study, here in perhaps more emphatic terms, as we learn that Muhammad himself commanded that mosques be built in China, “where [the] books could be studied.” Next, Muhammad was not simply a sage, but a scholar, a man of books, who ordered the dissemination of scholarly knowledge. Finally, Ding suggested that Islam constitutes a Dao through direct reference and comparison to Confucianism.

Most noteworthy, however, is that in this comparison Ding spoke *not* of “our” Islam versus the Confucianism of some external “them.” The books of Islam, he contended, “do not differ from *our* Confucianism.” As a scholar and literatus, Ding viewed Confucianism as no less “his” because he was a Muslim. Ding’s status as literatus automatically rendered Confucianism something of his realm. A second interpretation, too, here presents itself. “Our,” quite plausibly, could mean “of us Chinese”—a not unlikely possibility given that the passage deals with the decidedly non-Chinese origins of Islamic knowledge. This tale of the passage of envoys from east to west and of books from west to east speaks of distance if not of difference. In explaining that the books received from Muhammad’s legates do not differ from “our Confucianism,” Ding presented Islamic knowledge as a Dao, just like Confucianism. Through this explanation he also identified himself as Chinese. The Confucianism to which he compared Islam belongs to the Chinese, among whom Ding without hesitation counted himself. Here, then, we have perhaps the most potent account yet of the way in which Chinese Muslim scholars viewed themselves vis-à-vis Confucian literati culture: they saw themselves as part of it.

In 1738 Jin Tianzhu 金天柱 (fl. 1730s), an official in the Hanlin Academy, came at the question of the relationship between the

62. Ibid.

Dao of Islam and that of Confucianism in a slightly different way. Jin was prompted to write his book after another official, Lu Guohua 魯國華, an examiner from Anhui, harshly criticized the Chinese Muslims in a memorial to the emperor in 1730.⁶³ Jin expressed his opinion in two introductions he wrote for his book, the *Qingzhen shiyi* 清真釋疑 (Resolving doubts about Islam). In the first, dated 1738, he said: "Our teaching arrived in China during Sui and Tang times, now over a thousand years ago. [Muslims have been] civil and military officials; they are no different from Confucians" 吾教自隋唐沿入中華至今千百余年文員武將與儒無異. He then presented the major Chinese Islamic works as testifying to the long tradition of scholarship. "All these are the classics of our teaching [written] in order to explain the meaning of our teaching" 皆集吾教之經以闡吾教之義.⁶⁴ In the second introduction, he went a step further. According to Ding the books of Islam do not deviate from the teachings of Confucianism, but by Jin's account the two Daos of Islam and Confucianism are mutually compatible and informing, and each can be fully understood only alongside the other.⁶⁵

Here in Jin's words we have echoes of Mencius' discussion of the eastern and the western (barbarian) rulers, who were like "two matching parts of a tally." We have seen that Yuan Guozuo, in his introduction to Liu Zhi's late eighteenth-century biography of Muhammad, used this passage to validate Muhammad's position *qua* sage. Doubtless, Yuan would have read Jin's words as alluding to this understanding of the Islamic and the Confucian Daos as "two sides," both of which must be known in order for either to have meaning. Other Chinese Muslim scholars expressed similar notions, if in far less overt language. Jin's status as an official may have intensified his need to assert equal status for Islam and Confucianism, a need felt by many in the broader Chinese Muslim intel-

63. See Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 97–98. For the emperor's response, *QSMZJ*, 1: 33–34.

64. Jin Tianzhu, "Qingzhen shiyi yuan xu" 清真釋疑原序 (Original introduction to the *Qingzhen shiyi*), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 388.

65. Jin Tianzhu, "Qingzhen shiyi zixu" 清真釋疑自序 (Author's introduction to the *Qingzhen shiyi*), 1a–b; see also *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 375.

lectual community. Moreover, the fact that Jin wrote his apologia at a relatively late moment in the development and consolidation of Chinese Muslim knowledge made him more confident than earlier scholars. Earlier Chinese Muslim scholars, and those not as integrated into the bureaucratic system as Jin, were more understated and subtle in their explications of Islam as a Dao.

In 1642, Liang Yijun 梁以浚 (fl. 1640s–60s), the author of a preface to Wang Daiyu's *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, asked: "Should we say that what Confucianism teaches is wrong?" His answer is an emphatic "no" 然則儒者之道非乎曰否.⁶⁶ Liang explained: "The Confucian teachings regarding the relations between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, [and] between friends are all correct and all are important. We cannot say that these principles are wrong. However, Confucianism does not teach us where humans came from or what was in the beginning. That is why we study what our sage teaches us."⁶⁷

Clearly, Liang felt that something was missing from Confucianism and that Islam could fill in the gap. Similarly, Wang Daiyu himself commented that he wrote his texts to "save the people from mistakes."⁶⁸ The mistakes to which Wang referred, although he did not say so explicitly, are obviously those that can be found in Confucian thought or, at least, those that might be made because of what Confucianism fails to say. Another example of this effort to measure Islam against Confucianism is provided by He Hanjing 何漢敬, who wrote a preface to a 1657 edition of the same work. He basically repeated the argument made by Liang, adding that "there is much similarity between Islam and our Confucianism. However, our Islam broadens what is insufficient in our Confucianism." The message is that Confucianism is right as far as it goes and that Islam complements and completes what Confucianism initiates. He summarized the relationship between Islam and Confucianism as "similar yet different, different yet similar" *tong er*

66. Liang Yijun, "Zhengjiao zhenquan xu" 正教真詮序 (Introduction to the *Zhengjiao zhenquan*), in ZQX, pp. 2–3.

67. Ibid., p. 3.

68. Wang Daiyu, "Zhengjiao zhenquan zixu" 正教真詮自序 (Author's introduction to the *Zhengjiao zhenquan*), in ZQX, p. 16.

yi yi er tong 同而異異而同.⁶⁹ This phrase best exemplifies the complicated dynamic of the implicit dialogue Chinese Muslims conducted with their surrounding social environment. It was a dynamic that constantly created and maintained their simultaneous sameness and difference.

We have seen this attitude in the explications of the relationship between Muhammad and the other sages. Some Chinese Muslim scholars wrote that “their principle was the same”; here we see that their teachings were “similar.” At the same time, Muhammad’s non-Chinese origins were invoked. What, exactly, did Chinese Muslim scholars mean when they called Islam and Confucianism “similar” or even “the same”? They cannot have meant that Islam and Confucianism were literally the same; if that were true, then instead of constructing their own educational system, literature, and tradition, Muslims would instead simply have abandoned Islam. Instead, however, they emphasized, over and over, that they were the guardians of a separate tradition—even as they defined that tradition as similar to or the same as Confucianism.

One answer to this apparent paradox lies in the attitude of Chinese Muslims to their tradition *qua* tradition. This attitude is one that would have been appreciated by Confucians, for it was they who championed loyalty and commitment to the preservation and cultivation of one’s Dao as the cultural value par excellence. Chinese Muslims, as Chinese, shared this priority. The fact that Muslims were able to negotiate the space between Islam and Confucianism by asserting that they were similar and compatible traditions reflects their belief that the way to be a good (Muslim) Confucian was to follow and preserve the Dao—the Dao of Islam, the Dao that had been given to them specifically and that constituted the tradition to which they ought to direct their respect.

Here again, we can hear echoes of Yuan Guozuo’s portrayal of Muhammad: Muhammad is to Islam as Confucius is to Confucianism; the two are different yet the same. Likewise, Islam is to the Muslims as Confucianism is to the Confucians. Thus, the most

69. He Hanjing, “Zhengjiao zhenquan xu” 正教真詮敘 (Preface to the *Zhengjiao zhenquan*), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 307.

important pursuit for the Chinese Muslim, as a “good” Chinese, is loyalty to Islam.

These Chinese Muslim scholars challenge us to rethink our customary understanding of the categories of contemporary Chinese society. Confucianism here should be understood both as a specific intellectual tradition (a Dao) and as a general category in which *all* Chinese literati (Confucian and non-Confucian alike) could participate. The shared space of Muhammad and Confucius, and of Islam and Confucianism, is marked by this broader “Confucianism,” and one participates in it through scholarly study and literary production. Thus, Chinese Muslim scholarly writing on Islam and Confucianism seems to say: We—we cultured Chinese—we are all Confucians. Some Confucians have a Dao that is called Confucianism; some have in addition a Dao that is called Islam. Either way, we all are as good Confucians called to follow and respect our Dao. Thus we Confucians who are Muslims also follow the Dao that is Islam, and you Confucians who are only Confucians follow the Dao that is Confucianism.

The Dao of Islam and Chinese Muslim Scholarly Identity

In writing about Muhammad as a sage and Islam as a Dao, Chinese Muslim scholars made use of the cultural paradigms with which they were most familiar in order to make sense—Chinese sense—of Islam. This was a process, as I have attempted to show, that in part likely served to present Islam to the dominant culture in which Chinese Muslim scholars found themselves. Most important, however, in talking about Muhammad as a sage and about Islam as a Dao, Chinese Muslim scholars were talking about *themselves* and negotiating their identity as simultaneously Muslim and Chinese.

The validation given to Islam and to Muhammad through the strategies outlined above was also a validation of the scholars who deployed these strategies. By writing and thinking about what Muhammad meant in a Chinese context, Chinese Muslim scholars were giving expression to what it meant to be *themselves*. By interpreting Islam as a Dao, Chinese Muslim scholars were interpreting

themselves as—like their Confucian counterparts—true literati, as that term was defined by the dominant culture. As a result, Chinese Muslim scholarship about Islam and its founder and its textual tradition can be read as a metaphoric autobiography, a literature intended to convey something fundamental about the ways in which Chinese Muslim scholars understood themselves as fully Muslim and fully Chinese.

The best example of this can be found in Ma Zhu's autobiography, which was published along with his *Qingzhen zhinan*. Portions of its historical account can be corroborated in other sources. Ma's interpretation of the history of Islam in China shows him searching for a way to locate Islam within Chinese society. His invocation of his family's history as leaders of the Muslim community in Yunnan, a position granted them by the Chinese emperors, was clearly designed to give weight to his own claim to being a leader of the Muslims.

Ma's main claim to legitimacy as a leader is based not only on this family legacy but, even more so, on his status as scholar and member of the Islamic scholarly network. Throughout his autobiography, we see a thread of thought that forges a space for Islam within Confucian discourse. Ma saw in his own family history a thirteenth-century moment when Muslims and Chinese inhabited a shared political space that was based on the mutual interests of the Yuan (Mongol) and Ming emperors, on one hand, and the local Muslim rulers, on the other. Ma Zhu made use of this "memory" of political cohabitation to forge his own contemporary understanding of the shared space (now an intellectual and scholarly one) inhabited by Muslims and mainstream Confucians.

The autobiography begins with mention of the Sayyid Shams al-Din Omar, the Bokhari prince in the service of the Mongols and a descendant in the thirtieth generation of the Prophet Muhammad. Ma himself was removed from Shams al-Din by fifteen generations and thus could claim to be a direct descendant of the Prophet in the forty-fifth generation. Before looking at Ma's account of his family history, let us examine what the historical record of the period with which Ma's narration starts and then read Ma's autobiography against it.

Ma's ancestors, the Shams al-Din family, were Bokhari-Muslim nobility. In 1253, when the Mongol Prince Kubilai (later emperor of the Yuan dynasty) and General Uriyanqadai launched a military expedition against the Nanchao state (937-1254), an influx of Muslim soldiers poured into what came to be Yunnan.⁷⁰ These Muslims, having survived the Mongol conquests of their own homelands, were now conscripted into the Mongol armies to help conquer East Asia. As the Mongols conducted their campaign in China and expanded into Burma, increasing numbers of relocated Muslims (Central Asian Turks, Arabs, and Persians) filled positions as officials, soldiers, and craftsmen. The Muslims thus played an important role in the colonization of Yunnan, where many of them eventually settled. In 1274, the now emperor Kubilai Khan appointed Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din Omar to the governorship of Yunnan. Before assuming this post, Shams ad-Din had served as governor of Shaanxi and Sichuan.

During Omar's six-year tenure in Yunnan, he transformed the province (described as inhabited by "aboriginal people") into an integral part of China.⁷¹ He initiated agriculture on a large scale and developed the region's infrastructure, introducing advanced irrigation techniques, opening post roads, improving education, and restructuring the administrative system. Omar was apparently as interested in the integration of Yunnan into the empire as in its Islamization; in addition to two mosques, he built Confucian shrines and schools and a Buddhist monastery. Omar is best understood as the first great integrating (with China) influence on the newly acquired province of Yunnan and is remembered both in official Chinese histories and in those of the Muslim literary elite. If anything, he is a more important figure in the Chinese histories. Omar, like other major Chinese Muslim figures after him, is thus remembered as a perfect embodiment both of Confucian philosophical values and of Muslim ones. As one student of his life observes, "While traditional Chinese historians who have examined his life have portrayed him as a paragon of Confucian values, Chi-

70. Yang Huaizhong, "Yuandai donglai de Huihui shijia," pp. 2-3.

71. Armijo-Hussein, "Sayyid 'Ajall Shams al-Din," chap. 4.

nese Muslim scholars have described him as being simply an ideal Muslim official.”⁷²

Omar died in 1279, and his sons Naser al-Din (Nasulading 納速剌丁)⁷³ and Mas’ud (Ma Suhu 馬速忽) served as governors after him.⁷⁴ The Muslim community in Yunnan flourished under their rule. Modern Chinese Muslim scholarship, following centuries-old tendencies to remember this episode as a Muslim Golden Age, holds that the huge Muslim population that settled in Yunnan in this period soon became the dominant social group in the province and was largely responsible for its economic growth. Many Muslims filled positions in the administration and played leading roles in all spheres of life in the region.⁷⁵ Although there is no solid evidence to support these claims, Muslims soon came to constitute the overwhelming majority of Yunnan’s population. Only toward the end of the Ming did the Muslims lose their majority status to the Han Chinese, who had been settled there by the Ming.⁷⁶ Even after this, the Shams al-Din family continued for some time to be a vital part of the provincial administration, as the new central government continued, like its dynastic predecessor, to rely on the family’s political power to consolidate its control over the region.

The Shams al-Dins of Yunnan retained the title *sayyid* and were also ennobled during the Yuan and the Ming, when they carried the title “prince (king) of Xianyang” 咸陽王.⁷⁷ Other members of the family were ennobled as “dukes” (公) in such places as Yan’an 延安, Zhongjian 忠簡, and Wuhui 武蕙. Evidently, the central government in Beijing found these Muslim nobles a useful tool in

72. Ibid., p. 1.

73. For Nasr al-Din’s biography, see *HRZ (Yuandai)*, pp. 38–41.

74. It was after Mas’ud’s rule that the family assumed the Chinese family name Ma. Ma Zhu was a descendant of Mas’ud; see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, p. 49.

75. Gong Shiqin 貢師秦, “Sai dianchi jiazhuān” 賽典赤家傳 (A history of the Sayyid’s family), written during the Jiajing reign 嘉靖 (1522–66); in *HRZ (Yuandai)*, pp. 260.

76. *HRZ (Yuandai)*, pp. 17–37.

77. In 1690, Ma Zhu himself wrote a new, long, and detailed tombstone inscription for his ancestor’s grave: see “Xianyang wang Sai dianchi Shansiding bei xu” 咸陽王賽典赤瞻思丁碑 (Stone tablet of the Prince of Xianyang, Sayyid Shams al-Din), in *HRZ (Yuandai)*, pp. 262–68.

the dual processes of first colonizing and then maintaining the peace and stability of Yunnan. During the late Ming, once Yunnan had been fully incorporated into the empire, this form of superstratification ceased, and officials were sent to serve as governors of the province from Beijing.⁷⁸

Much of this information can be found in Ma Zhu's autobiography, a text in which the early Muslim history of Yunnan becomes the backdrop for the story of Ma's glorious ancestry.⁷⁹ In its opening sentence, we learn that his family line can be traced back to the great teachers (*shi* 師), among them Adam, Noah (Nuhai 努海), Abraham (Yibulaximo 倚補喇希默; probably an approximation of the Arabic pronunciation "Ibrahim"), and their own sage (*shengren* 聖人), Muhammad.⁸⁰ Ma Zhu then enumerated the generations that followed the appointment of Omar as governor of Yunnan and mentioned the titles that the family held during the Yuan and Ming. According to his account, his family included eight kings (or princes, *wang* 王), eight ministers (*xiang* 相), five dukes (*gong* 公), five barons (*hou* 侯), and five military generals (*shuai* 帥).⁸¹

Ma then turned to his own life story, commencing with his service in the Yongli court. The main themes of the autobiography from this point on are the circumstances that gave rise to his book and the book itself, which he proudly described as having "more than one hundred thousand characters." Ma explained that he decided to write the book upon realizing that the community of his own "people" (*min* 民) was imperfect. Specifically, they had become "wayward and indolent" (*wanduo zhi min* 頑惰之民),⁸² a problem attributable to the inadequacy of Chinese Muslim education in Yunnan. Their "instructors and teachers" (*jiangjiao zhi ren* 講教之人) "had shameful hearts, were not talented, . . . and failed to follow the teachings" 學者無真材而有姤心 . . . 不率教.⁸³ Con-

78. Ibid., pp. 262–63.

79. Ma Zhu, "Yusufu zhuan" 郁速馥傳 (Autobiography of Yusuf), in QZZN, pp. 28–33; and HRZ (*Qingdai*), pp. 331–37.

80. See HRZ (*Yuandai*), p. 262.

81. Ma Zhu, "Yusufu zhuan," in QZZN, pp. 28–29.

82. Ibid., p. 30.

83. Ibid., p. 31.

sequently, the community was “neither *Ru* nor *Hui* 不儒不回.”⁸⁴ That is, they were “neither Confucian nor Muslim.”

The two are presented here as equally acceptable possibilities—Ma’s lament was not that the people were failing to be good Muslims but that, as wayward Muslims, they were being neither Confucian *nor* Muslim. But even to say that the either Islam or Confucianism is an acceptable possibility is perhaps not an accurate exegesis, for Islam and Confucianism are not here presented as alternatives at all. One need not be *either* Muslim *or* Confucian; but without engaging in a lifetime of diligent study and scholarship, one can be *neither*. The implication is that by following Ma’s lead, one can in effect become both Muslim and Confucian.

Ma’s autobiography is a summation of the Muslim position regarding the relationship between Confucianism and Islam. More important, however, it is at once both a personal history and a history of Islam and its place in Chinese society. Through telling the story of his ancestors and the role they played in the imperial civilizing project in Yunnan, Ma was able also to tell the parallel story of Islam and its role in the civilizing process in China as a whole.

In doing so, Ma did not in any way negate the civilizing influences of Confucian thought. On the contrary, he affirmed them by suggesting that Islam, like Confucianism, shares these influences. The fact that the Muslims of Yunnan are poorly educated means that they are neither Muslim nor Confucian; to be well educated (i.e., to be a true literatus), by implication, one must, at a minimum, be Confucian; better still is to be both Confucian and Muslim. Islam and Confucianism are thus both paths that civilize; through the study of these paths, one can become a literatus and, consequently, the ideal Chinese.

This stance is expressed again in Ma’s tribute to the Kangxi emperor, which appears in the first volume of the *Guide*. Like the opening passages of his autobiography, this text, the “Jin jing shu” 進經疏 (Memorial to the throne regarding the presented classic), focuses on convincing the emperor of the worthiness of Islam.⁸⁵

84. Ibid. Ma specifically says that it was because of this text that he wrote *Qing bao biao*.

85. Ma Zhu, “Jin jing shu,” in QZZN, pp. 21–22.

Again, Ma emphasized the civilizing effects of Islam and made the remarkable claim that Islam not only is not a threat to Confucianism but can actually further its taming, civilizing work. "If the reasoning and the truth of this book will reach the [the people], it would be advantageous to the society; [Islam's reasoning and truth] would demolish unorthodox opinions and *help* Confucianism. [I] beg Your Highness, show mercy and do not punish me, forgive me for my foolish [venture], and bestow favors and graciously disseminate this book throughout China" 果使言可濟世黜異扶儒乞望聖恩寬斧鉞宥臣愚懵用頒海內.⁸⁶

Ma was suggesting that Islam ought to be used by the imperium as a tool against heresies and "unorthodox opinions," which might threaten the harmony and stability of the empire. In effect, he invited the Manchu rulers to be patrons of Islam, at least of his version of it. Rawski has shown how the Manchus used patronage of Tibetan Buddhism as a political tool.⁸⁷ I suggest that this is what Ma Zhu was trying to accomplish for the Muslims as well (with himself installed as their leader, perhaps). Ma could venture such a suggestion because of his presentation and understanding of Islam as a Dao, of Muhammad as a sage, and of Muslim activity as consisting largely of scholarship. The Confucian view that scholarship and study are civilizing influences is, in these interpretations, shared by Islam. Islam and Confucianism are thus presented as compatible, comparable, and mutually intelligible. The Chinese-Muslim vision of the interconnectedness of Islam and scholarship allows Chinese Muslim scholars to view their tradition as an important tool in the imperial project of civilization. Again, the timing of the consolidation of this understanding of Islam is striking; it came just as the Qing dynasts similarly negotiated their Manchuness.

Teaching Chinese Muslims About Their Origins

Chinese Muslim scholars sought to forge their identity by expanding China's fundamental cultural categories. Through the notions of sagehood and the "Dao of Islam," they were able to create a

86. Ibid., p. 22.

87. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 251–63.

space for themselves and their tradition within Chinese elite literary culture. There was one final task, however, that needed to be undertaken. Chinese Muslim scholars had also to account for the Muslim presence in China. Here again, Chinese Muslim scholars found a way to present themselves and Islam as harmonious with—and even vital to—the survival of Chinese tradition.

The task of explaining Islam's origins in China was effected through the telling of a foundation myth, analogous to the one Crossley has documented in the case of the Manchus. Like Chamberlain, Crossley argues that myths contain important "truths" of a cultural, if not strictly factual, sort: "Myth is not necessarily falsehood or fantasy. It is a way of folding interpretations inside one another to create a coherent and if possible persuasive narrative of the origins of cultural authority or political power."⁸⁸ Crossley's work has shown how Manchu myths of origin strongly *effected* their own identity and *affected* a host of other identities (Mongol, for example).⁸⁹ The Manchus developed myths to address questions of legitimacy, rulership, and identity.⁹⁰ The creation of the foundation myth of the Manchus and the Qing royal house was part of a long process that culminated during the Qianlong reign—the precise moment at which Chinese Muslims were seeking to explain their own origins and identity.

The reasons the Muslims deployed such myths were strikingly similar to those that motivated the Manchus. Crossley explains that the Qing dynasty "depended" on foundation myths to gain and create "symbolic legitimacy and cultural coherence."⁹¹ The foundation myths of the Chinese Muslim scholarly community served precisely the same function. By simultaneously upholding and decentering "Chinese" categories, the *Han Kitab* scholars both legitimated themselves to the mainstream proponents of those categories and laid claim to them themselves.

88. Crossley, *The Manchus*, pp. 47–48. See also by Crossley, "An Introduction to the Manchu Foundation Myth"; *A Translucent Mirror*, pp. 133–34; 196–215; and "Manzhou yuanliu kao,"

89. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, pp. 192–215.

90. In addition to Crossley's work, see also Elliot, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 42–46.

91. Crossley, "An Introduction to the Qing Foundation Myth," p. 13.

Crossley has convincingly argued that, in the Qing case, this “culmination” consisted in the externalization, or objectification, in imperial form (through regulation, bureaucracy, and the like), of markers of identity that had previously been internalized, inchoate, and immanent in the “old culture,” embedded in “clans and confederations.”⁹² I suggest that a similar process of consolidation and externalization of Chinese Muslim identity took place through the development and formalization of the educational network. Whereas the locus of Manchu identity came in the Qianlong era to be the imperium itself, for urban elite Chinese Muslims of the same period, scholarly activity and the social structure in which it was embedded was the fountain from which identity sprang.

Part of this transition, in Crossley’s account, involves “the documentation of descent, myth, clan history, and shamanic practice; what had once been various and mystically obscure was now made visible, manageable, and standard.”⁹³ Parallel mechanisms were at work in the consolidation, through the educational network, of Chinese Muslim identity. Zhao Can’s *Genealogy* is but the most obvious example. The compilation of bibliographies, the reissuing and translating of Islamic books (oftentimes with the addition of prefaces, commentaries, and “greetings”) were, within the context of the *Han Kitab* scholarly network, similar forms of documentation that both signaled and fostered the consolidation and formalization of Chinese Muslim identity.

The *Genealogy* had as one of its central components the inclusion of anecdotes and informal biographical information. It was, in short, a codification and transmission of what had been an oral, changing, body of knowledge into a written—and thus authoritative—form. Similarly, the origin myths included in the *Han Kitab* represented the self-conscious compilation of a hitherto diffuse, informal, and largely oral tradition.

Finally, just as the Manchus in their myths “folded together” disparate elements from a variety of Chinese and Manchu records, so, too, did Muslim scholars assemble their heritage from folk tra-

92. Crossley, “*Manzhou yuanliu kao*,” p. 761.

93. Ibid.

ditions, tombstones, and mosque steles as well as official Chinese records and books.

The most remarkable feature of this process was that it occurred at almost exactly the same time that the Manchus were working to produce and formalize their own heritage. The major work of Manchu myth/history, the *Comprehensive History of the Eight Banners*, was produced at precisely the same moment as the central texts within the *Han Kitab* that relate specifically to the history and identity of the Chinese Muslim community. Just as Islam had, through the interpretation of it as a “dao,” come to be understood as an object of study—the object of study that gave definition to the Chinese Muslim “school”—the community itself became an object of study and documentation.

Myths were used for a similar end by other so-called minority groups in China. In an analysis of a Mongolian legend regarding the building of Beijing, Hok-Lam Chan argues that the legend blended Mongolian cultural traditions with Han ones. The evolution of the legend thus “bear[s] witness to the interplay of Han Chinese and Mongolian traditions.”⁹⁴

Just as Crossley and Chan see in such myths evidence of the vulnerability and flexibility of Han Chinese cultural categories, I suggest that Chinese Muslim origin myths also seek to blend different cultural strands (here, Islamic and “Confucian”). Within the body of knowledge contained in the *Han Kitab*, one distinct genre of literature is, uncharacteristically, concerned not with scholarship but with explaining how, why, and when Muslims arrived in China. Invariably, these stories depict the arrival of Muslims in China as a response to a crisis, one that the Muslims are summoned to solve. Within the *Han Kitab*, four such texts are specifically dedicated to this purpose.⁹⁵

94. Hok-Lam Chan, “A Mongolian Legend About the Building of Peking,” p. 92.

95. Liu Zhi, *Huihui shuo* 回回說 (Explanation of *huihui*); in *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* (1874), 20: 26a–28b; Liu Zhi’s father, Liu Sanjie, composed the *Qingzhen jiaoshuo* 清真教說 (Explanation of the Pure and True Religion [Islam]), in *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 223–26. A third text is the *Xilai xongpu* 西來總譜 (A record of the coming from the west). All three texts are found in different *Han Kitab* collections; see Broomhall, *Islam in China*, p. 68.

The most famous of these, the *Huihui yuanlai*, takes the form of a tale within a tale.⁹⁶ The frame story describes an encounter between the Kangxi emperor and a Chinese Muslim general named Ma.⁹⁷

In 1662, the Qing Kangxi emperor, on his return from a journey beyond the Great Wall,⁹⁸ stopped at the yamen of General Ma to rest overnight. One night, the emperor and the general discussed principle and the Dao. The emperor asked, "You Muslim, do you know the origins of your name and the meaning of your Dao?" The general answered, "I do not know." The emperor asked again, "Do you know why Islam is called 'the Pure and True'?" The general answered, "I do not know [this either]." The emperor asked again, "Do you know why you came from the west to China? At what time and for what reason?" The answer was "I still don't know."

The Emperor said, "I have a book here for you to read that will inform you of these matters."⁹⁹

96. The *Huihui yuanlai* (in 2 volumes, 51 leaves) has been widely circulated since at least 1712. Ma Kuangyuan, a scholar of Chinese Muslim literature, traces the origins of the story back to the Ming dynasty. According to Ma, earlier versions of this story were already circulating among Chinese Muslim communities at that time. It assumed its final version during the second half of the seventeenth century, after the Ming-Qing transition. The version available to us was already in this form in 1712. See Ma Kuangyuan, "*Huihui yuanlai*." Gabriel Devéria translated the tale and published it in 1895 in his "Origines de l'Islamisme en Chine," pp. 62-69.

97. In another place, the *Huihui yuanlai* says that this general was Ma Jinliang 馬進良 of Xining (then Gansu) (fl. ca. 1640s-1720s). A high-ranking officer, Ma appears in official records several times for meeting with the Kangxi emperor. This was probably the reason why his name was, at some point, inserted into the *Huihui yuanlai*. For Ma Jinliang's biography, see *HRZ (Qingdai)*, pp. 85-89.

98. Again, the author is skillfully using a known "Chinese" ingredient: Kangxi's tours across the Great Wall and all over China, in which he took the opportunity to examine his administrators and officers. See, e.g., Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. xii-xv, 7-23, 157-66. Furthermore, the reference to the emperor as the "Kangxi emperor" suggests that this part of the story was added to it at a later stage, perhaps during the Qianlong reign era, after Kangxi's death. The idea that another layer involving the Kangxi emperor was added to the story at a later point makes sense since it is also fits nicely with the history of the Qing expansion to Xinjiang and beyond the Great Wall (beyond the "pass"). This way, Qing imperialism becomes part of the story as well.

99. *Huihui yuanlai*. I also use Ma Kuangyuan's punctuated version; see *Huihui yuanlai (zhengli ben)*, p. 72.

The emperor then gave the book to the general, who replied: "I cannot read, but I am glad to receive the book, and I beg permission to seek help from some educated person such that I might understand it." The general had the book transcribed and distributed it among other Muslims.

Contained within the book given to the general by the Kangxi emperor was the following story:

One night Emperor Taizong (r. 626–49) of the Tang dynasty dreamt that a roof beam of his golden palace was collapsing. The roof beam nearly smashed his head, but it was intercepted and pushed back by a man standing on the right-hand side of the bed. The man wore a green robe, and a white turban was wound around his head. He had a towel draped over his shoulder and a water kettle in his left hand. He had deep eye sockets, a high nose bridge, and a brown face. Alarmed, the emperor upon waking immediately summoned his counselors. One of them, Xu Mao, knew at once what the problem was: the empire was in danger; this was the meaning of the falling roof beam. The strange man was a Hui, a Muslim from the western regions. The Great Tang Empire needed the Hui people for its defense, he concluded.¹⁰⁰

Taizong, the story continues, sent envoys to the western regions asking for some Muslims to come and save his empire. In response, three thousand Muslims arrived in China. They were led by a "noble Muslim," one Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas (in the text "Sahaba Saahde Wan Gesi" 撒哈八撒阿的輓葛思),¹⁰¹ a companion of the Prophet Muhammad himself. Upon his arrival in China, Sa'ad and the emperor had a discussion concerning sages and sagehood (the section is entitled "Praise to Confucius and a Comparison of the Sages" ("Zan kong bi sheng" 贊孔比聖)).¹⁰² The exchange resulted in the emperor's concluding that Confucianism and Islam were compatible with one another.

100. *Huibui yuanlai (zhengli ben)*, pp. 53–54.

101. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas is also mentioned in official records (such as the *Mingshi*, "Xiyu zhuan" 明史西域傳); see Li Xinghua et al, *Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*, pp. 24–27. The only possible explanation for this mystery is that local Chinese Muslim traditions found their way into Ming official records. It is also possible that much later the author(s) of the *Huibui yuanlai* relied on the official sources for their own concoction.

102. *Huibui yuanlai (zhengli ben)*, pp. 65–67.

The story concludes by telling us that the Muslims living in contemporary China today (i.e., the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) were the direct descendants of these early Muslims sent expressly by Muhammad. When these first visitors grew homesick in China, the emperor allowed them to marry Chinese women and build mosques. On the other hand, the Prophet ordered them to stay in China as long as they keep their Islamic tradition. And so they stayed in China.¹⁰³ The *Huibui yuanlai* ends with the following poem:

Formerly Islam was found only beyond the western border.
 Who would know that Muslims were to dwell in China forever?
 It only came about through the Tang emperor's dream in the night
 That three thousand men were brought to establish it.
 By imperial order the seal of the Board of Astronomy was given
 to one of them.
 They dwelt peacefully in China pacifying the state.
 All thanks to the grace of the emperor of the Tang for his fine
 ritual treatment;
 Even today we protect the state, not moving again.
 回回原來都西域。如何中國永莫居。只因唐王一夜夢。移來三千
 立根居。敕封印欽天監。安居中原地永寧。深感唐王優禮重，至今
 保國更無移。¹⁰⁴

The implications of this string of tales are clear and scarcely need comment: Chinese Muslims are an ancient and authentic presence in China, they are connected directly and intimately to Muhammad, they saved the Chinese empire from collapse, and ever since they have been a calming and "pacifying" influence. The fact that it is the Kangxi emperor himself who "introduces" the tale into Chinese tradition by giving the book to the Muslim general validates the text itself; the fact that a Tang emperor summoned the Muslims to China validates their very existence in the east.

A less apparent, but perhaps more important dimension of the tale relates to what I have referred to as the *diasporic* aspect of the

103. A version of the story appears in a collection of Muslim Chinese folk tales; see Li Shuijiang and Karl Lukert, *Mythology and Folklore of the Hui*, pp. 237–38.

104. The translation of this poem is taken from Broomhall, *Islam in China*, p. 64 (I have made a few minor corrections). For the original, see *Huibui yuanlai* (*zhengli ben*), p. 53.

Chinese Muslim identity. The poem's final line, "Even today we protect the state, not moving again," at once states the Muslim presence in China to be permanent and implies the exact, complicated opposite. The Muslim presence has been continuous since Tang times and will probably continue, but it is always conditioned on the Muslims' mythical burden of "pacifying the state." It is therefore always *temporal* and potentially *temporary*; at the same time, however, it is potentially *eternal*. The mission of "pacifying the empire" merely by living in it not only justifies the Muslim presence in China but also conditions it and sets the parameters for its potential end. As a diasporic collectivity, then, the Muslims of China are always in a state of "permanent temporariness."¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, as a collective, the Chinese Muslims were born at the moment of convergence between Chinese and Islamic histories. It was a powerful moment, a moment of an (indirect) encounter between the Tang emperor and the Prophet Muhammad. This moment is always present in the consciousness of the Chinese Muslims, who are *always* charged with the mission to keep China pacified. Consequently, this moment is constantly being replicated. It is a moment Chinese Muslims must not forget. And so, in the story the Kangxi emperor "admonishes" a Chinese Muslim general who did forget. Thus, this ever-present and continuous moment positions, time and again, the Chinese Muslims at the convergence of the histories to which they belong. The meaning of Chinese Muslim history is, therefore, the unfolding of that one moment. The story, then, is not simply about legitimizing the Muslim presence in China, but also about the complicated relationship between that specific group and China and its history.

A bit more should be said, however, about the identity of the noble Muslim, "Wan Gesi," the first Muslim to come to China, whose full significance is perhaps not immediately apparent from this tale. According to various Chinese Muslim accounts, Wan Gesi arrived in China in the mid-seventh century and established a Muslim community and mosque in Canton, where he was later

105. This formulation brings to mind the Jewish definition of "exile," which is a permanent state that could be ended at any moment by the coming of the Messiah.

buried. Some versions speak of a mosque and tomb in Fujian. Leslie has identified this man as the *sahāba* (companion of the Prophet) Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas, who was also Muhammad's maternal cousin.¹⁰⁶ Leslie traces the origins of this legend back to the early Ming dynasty, estimating that it is of the late fourteenth century. Some Islamic monuments erected near mosques in eastern China claim them to have been built by this man.

Leslie points out that the "real" Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas was buried in Medina around 675 and never went to China, let alone received burial there.¹⁰⁷ Leslie is no doubt correct, but from a Chinese Muslim point of view, his fine research begs the question. For the point, sociologically speaking, is not whether Sa'ad went to China, but why so many Chinese Muslims found it important to believe that he did. The "truth" of the Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas legend lies not in historical fact but in the function of *belief* in this legend for the Chinese Muslim scholarly community. The development and persistence of this legend in Chinese Islamic tradition hold a significance that a simple evaluation of its factuality cannot comprehend. Its inclusion in the *Huihui yuanlai*—the ultimate Chinese Muslim source on their own origins—shows its widespread replication, which in turn led to its ultimate importance in Chinese Muslim tradition.

The "historical factuality" of Mohammad's companion's visit to China and its crucial, from a Chinese Islamic point of view, consequences were apparently on Liu Zhi's mind as he composed the *Zhisheng shilu*. In the biography the main details of the *Huihui yuanlai* are given. In the *Zhisheng shilu* we find an ostensibly direct quotation from the Prophet, ordering that those sent by him to China to disseminate Islam in the East. In this account we learn that in the "second year of the Call [i.e., the period of revelation], the Prophet sent a delegation headed by Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas to China. Only Sa'ad returned back to Arabia." The delegation was

106. On Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas, see Gibb and Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 482–83.

107. See Leslie, "The Sahaba Sa'd [Sa'ad] Ibn Abi Waqqas in China." See also Broomhall, *Islam in China*, pp. 74–76.

sent at the request of the Chinese emperor himself, who, “having seen an omen in the sky, sent an envoy to Arabia.”¹⁰⁸

Twenty years later, we learn, the Chinese emperor sent another envoy to Arabia; in response Muhammad again dispatched Sa‘ad ibn Abi Waqqas to the East. This time the Prophet is quoted as telling Sa‘ad that: “Several officers who went before have stayed in the east and have not returned. They must be increasing in numbers, and [thus] it is fitting that you [go there to] teach the Scripture and instruct them in the rites and ceremonies.”¹⁰⁹

My reading of the Arabic version of the *Sirat al-Nabi* (which was done by the author’s son) of the text shows these two paragraphs do not exist in the biography. Furthermore, the claim that the Prophet—or Islam—was known in China (or even outside Arabia) in the “second year of the call,” even before the Hegira is impossible. Liu Zhi, then, simply interpolated the sections describing the Prophet’s link, through Sa‘ad ibn Abi Waqqas, with China. He did so in order to further the formalization of the Chinese Muslim foundation myth propagated by the *Huihui yuanlai* and similar texts and traditions, providing ostensible “proof” that accounts of the story existed in sources from outside China, such as Kazaruni’s *Sirat al-Muntaqā*. Translating the biography, in this sense, was not merely another scholarly project carried out by a *Han Kitab* scholar, but a step in the ongoing process of documenting the Chinese Muslim foundation myth.

Liu Zhi would not have regarded his interpolation as a “lie.” Rather, it was an expression of a meta-truth or a mythical truth, a truth that held that Islam had been in China since its very origins

108. For this study, I used two editions of the text in question; see the Works Cited for bibliographic information. The citations are from Liu Zhi, *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* (1984), p. 120.

109. Liu Zhi, *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* (1984), pp. 265–66. It is interesting to compare God’s word to the exiles in Babylon in Jeremiah 29:4–7: “To all the exiles whom I deported from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live; plant gardens and eat the produce; marry wives and rear families; choose wives to your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters. Increase there and do not dwindle away. Seek the welfare of any city to which I have exiled you, and pray to the Lord for it; on its welfare your welfare will depend.”

and that Muhammad had viewed China as an important site for the future of his calling. Most important, it held that China, although outside the House of Islam, had a specific place in a Muslim world-view and that its Muslims, while geographically separated from Arabia, were part of the core original elite of Muhammad's religious and literary vision.

Liu Zhi clearly saw the text as serving this cause. To the translation of the original text, he added two additional volumes. The first (the nineteenth volume) is a collection of documents about the geography, topography, and peoples of the Muslim world, country by country, all drawn from Chinese sources; it provides a "Chinese" explanation of the Muslim world. Familiarizing the reader with the Muslim world through Chinese sources legitimizes his account and brings together the two worlds—the Muslim and Chinese. What counts here is not geographical accuracy but the fact that Muslim world is represented and accounted for in official Chinese documents, now being presented to the Chinese Muslim reader. Another example of this suggestion is found in a "map of the world" that Liu included in his *Tianfang xingli* (see Appendix). This map depicts a perfectly round world and indicates the north and south poles. But rather than showing the shape of the continents, the map names what appear to be the main regions in the Islamic world imagination transliterations from the Arabic inside circles in the following order from West to East: Europe (*Ou ri ba* 偶日巴); Africa (*Sui dang* 鎖當); Syria (*Xi er yang* 細爾洋); Arabia (*Ah er bi* 啊爾壁); Persia (*Fa er xi* 法而西); Hindustan [India] (*Yin du si tang* 飲度斯唐); and China (*Chi ni* 赤泥, a transliteration of the Persian word for China).

The second volume added to the biography (the twentieth volume) takes us a step further in this process of documentation. It is a collection of official Chinese documents relating to Chinese Muslims. Liu compiled Ming edicts and prefaces to Islamic scientific texts that had been translated into Chinese (which had become part of the Ming scientific corpus); he copied steles lauding Islam erected by Ming emperors who had sponsored the renovation of mosques. In addition, the volume included two texts of particular importance. The first, written by Liu's father, was entitled "Explication of Is-

lam,” and summarizes in three pages the essence of Islam. The second, by Liu Zhi himself, is entitled *Huihuijiao* 回回說 “Explication of *huihui*.” Here, the term *huihui* itself—a longtime designation used for Chinese Muslims—is the object of study. Liu wrote:

The people of the Qingzhen teaching, which in Arabic are called Mu'mins or Mushi, are those who follow the teaching of the sage Muhammad 請真教人天方本稱穆民，穆士蓋謂從穆罕默德聖人之教者也而此地稱之爲回回不知其從何起意。In China they are called Huihui; I do not know from where this idea arose. Roughly speaking, when our Dao arrived in China beginning with the Sui and the Tang periods, it passed through the land of the Uighurs [Huihe] 蓋吾道之自西而東也始於隋唐經回紇國來。The land of the Uighurs is China's neighbor and Arabia's neighbor; the people there follow the Islamic teaching. Since the religion is the same, we came to be addressed as “Huihe” [like the Uighurs, although we are not Uighurs]. During the Song and the Yuan periods, many Muslim scholars and learned men arrived [in China] *en masse*, [and] they realized that the term “Huihe” was inappropriate so they changed it to *huihui*. The sound is almost the same, but the meaning is considerably deeper. 回紇乃中國之邊譯，亦天方之邊譯也。行天方之教，教類相似，則以吾人亦稱回紇。至宋元，天方學人大至，視「回紇」二字無謂而改爲「回回」，聲音相近而義理頗深。¹¹⁰

The shift from the *huihe* to *huihui* can be seen as indigenizing: what matters to Liu is not so much that Chinese Muslims and Uighurs are the coreligionists, but that the Muslims of China are a distinct, simultaneously Muslim and Chinese people. *Huihui*, a Chinese term, is thus an appropriate designation for these people, but a transliteration of a term for Uighur is not.

As if to underscore this point, Liu emphasizes the importance throughout dynastic history of China's Muslims—the Huihui—to official Chinese tradition, in which they have been recorded as Huihui since the Yuan. Addressing what appear to be Chinese Muslims who shun the term because of its possible negative connotations, Liu said:

We should proudly carry the name Huihui. . . . The founder of the Ming dynasty valued Huihui science. The Yuan dynasty valued Huihui ability. The Song dynasty valued Huihui culture. And the Tang dynasty valued

110. Liu Zhi, “Huihui shuo,” in *ZSSL* (1874), 20: 26a.

Huihui teaching. The son of heaven and the dignitaries of today do not think that the Huihui are a vulgar people. When the dignitaries and the officials read what we write, they will praise the excellent virtue of the Hui people.¹¹¹

Just as earlier Muslims had had value to earlier dynasties as scientists, administrators, and the like, the Muslims of the Qing had value as scholars.

Liu's *Zhisheng shilu*, with its two added volumes, was intended by its author-translator to be the most comprehensive and formal treatment of Chinese Islam and to contain the answer to every question a Chinese Muslim might have about his own identity. It includes not only a biography of the central figure of Islam, a characterization of the Islamic world, and Chinese historical documents pertaining to Chinese Islam, but also an explanation of the Chinese term for the Chinese Muslim community itself.

At the moment of the consolidation of the Chinese educational network, then, the Huihui themselves and their history had become rightful objects of study. The genealogical preoccupation of Chinese Muslim scholarly circles was, of course, one reflection of this fact. So, too, was Liu Zhi's perception of the Huihui people as a group who had contributed to the stability and strength of several Chinese dynasties and as a group who in the Qing were to make their most significant contribution to Chinese greatness through scholarship.



The Chinese Muslim scholarly network both created and propagated a very specific type of Chinese Muslim identity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By embracing the very cultural categories that stood as markers of Confucian literati dominance, Chinese Muslim intellectuals were able discursively to create a space for themselves and their tradition at the very center of Chinese society. This process simultaneously demonstrates the flexibility of those categories and the insistence on the part of Chinese

Muslim scholars that they were rightful members of mainstream Chinese literati culture.

Paradoxically, through the adoption of the specific ingredients most essential to “Chineseness” (the preservation of tradition, the study of a Dao, the veneration of the sages, and loyalty to the state), Chinese Muslims solidified their identity as Muslims as well. Even as the expansion of Chinese categories made it possible for Islam to be “encompassed” by China, that very same process made it possible for Chinese Muslim scholars to encompass—to understand—China through Islam. The Chinese Muslim educational network became a mechanism that consistently reinforced “Confucian” values even while it identified them as stemming from the Dao of Islam. At the same time, Chinese Muslim scholarship produced and disseminated foundation myths that validated its producers’ status as Muslims and as legitimate Chinese, that is, as Confucians. As supposed direct descendants of a companion of the prophet, Chinese Muslims were authenticated in their Muslimness. These same myths also served to emphasize the essential role of Islam in China as a “pacifying” presence, one that echoed and even furthered Confucian precepts. Chinese Muslim scholars thus negotiated an identity that was at once Chinese and Muslim and that saw no fundamental difference between the two. The identity consisted of the overlapping space between an imagined and reified “Islam” and “China,” and the strategy was once one of encompassment and encompassability.

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CONCLUSION

Dialogue in Action

A memorial sent to the throne on June 21, 1782, set in motion a chain of events and a flurry of communiqués that put Muslims in direct dialogue with the Qing emperor. Taken together, these documents tell the story of a concluding episode in the creation, formation, and (perhaps unintended) formalization of the *Han Kitab*. They also provide an explicit glimpse of the “implicit dialogue” in which literati Muslims had long been engaged. The cultural interaction of the *Han Kitab*, which, to the minds of its scholars at least, brought together Muslim, Confucian, and imperial voices, is brought out of the text and into lived history in the events of June and July of 1782.

In mid-June of that year, Zhu Chun 朱椿, the governor-general of Guangxi-Guangdong, composed a detailed report about a recent arrest in the prefecture of Guilin. Zhu reported that the prefect of Guilin had informed him that his police had arrested a “Muslim bandit” (*Huifei* 回匪) by the name of Hai Furun 海富潤.¹ Arrests of Chinese Muslim rebels were not uncommon at the time, since the empire was busy suppressing a series of revolts involving Chinese Muslims in China’s northwestern provinces of Gansu and Shaanxi.² This arrest, however, took place in southeastern China,

1. Zhu Chun, memorial to the emperor, 6.21.1782, “Wei panhuo Huifei” 爲盤獲回匪 (Regarding the arrest and interrogation of a Hui rebel), ZSSL (1874), 1: 4b-6b. The communications (memorials to the emperor and the imperial responses and edicts) relating to this event appear in several collections. For the emperor’s responses, which quote the main points in each memorial, see QSMZJ, 1: 737-42.

2. The entire period between 1781 and 1911 is characterized by historians of Chinese Islam as a period of “deteriorating” conditions and rebellion. With the

thousands of miles away from the centers of violence. And it did not involve violence at all. Rather, its cause—and the topic of the reports detailing it—was a collection of unknown books found among the vagabond's possessions. The arrest was the starting point of a drama that was to last for almost three months. Its cast of characters would grow to include several non-Muslim officials, the Qianlong emperor, and various Chinese Muslims involved with the production and dissemination of *Han Kitab* books, some of whom are by now familiar figures from the Chinese Muslim scholarly network.

The governor-general reported to the emperor that the policemen responsible for the arrest of Hai Furun had grown suspicious at the sight of a man whose head was almost entirely shaven, leaving only a very short braid in the back. The figure struck them “as a Buddhist monk only recently returned to the laity” 一人初蓄辮髮狀似僧還俗僧人. In the late eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for vagabonds to arouse suspicion and alarm. As Philip Kuhn has shown in *Soulstealers*, officials in late imperial China suspected every wandering male to be either a bandit or a rebel.³

It was Hai's status as a vagrant and the possibility of his being a wandering Buddhist monk that drew the attention of the local authorities; at the moment of arrest, his “Muslimness” was not yet known to those who seized him and initially played no role in the events. At first, the most apparently alarming or “rebellious” thing about him was his hairstyle. At the time of the arrest, then, he was not yet regarded as a *Huifei*. The man bore no external markers that identified him as Muslim. Only when he was searched was Hai's identity as a Muslim revealed and established as potentially relevant to the situation.

According to Zhu's report, Hai told his interrogators that he was a Muslim from the village of Sanya 三亞 in Yaizhou 崖州 pre-

exception of the Du Wenxiu rebellion in Yunnan, all the rebellions took place in northwestern China. Additionally, there were rebellions by Muslims in the “new dominion,” Xinjiang. For a detailed narrative and analysis of this period, as well as criticism of previous literature, see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 103–67. See also Lipman's “Ethnic Conflict in Modern China”; and Yu Zhengui, *Zhongguo li-dai zhengquan yu Yisilanjiao*, pp. 211–76.

3. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*.

lecture (Hainan island) in Guangdong. He identified himself as a student who had been traveling and studying for nine years and explained that his queue was short and his head shorn only because of a recent skin disease (髮因病脫新蓄未長等語). Hai's explanations did not, however, lead to his release.

Zhu explained to the emperor why he felt it prudent to keep the man detained:

[When] his belongings were inspected, a box with twenty-one volumes of classics in Hui characters [i.e., Arabic script] was found. Some [of the books] had been copied by him, others had been purchased; there is no way to know whether there is something offensive in their content. [Also in Hai's possession] were ten copies of *The Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam*, one copy of the *Explication of the Meaning of Arabic Letters*, one copy of the *Resolving Doubts About Islam*, and one copy of *Islam's Three Character Classic*. All these books were written by one Hui person from Jiangning [Nanjing] [named] Liu Zhi and were printed by Yuan Guozuo and others between 1775 and 1778. The printing blocks [of these books] are stored in the Yuan family house [in Nanjing]. In general, all the books contain language that extols the king of the western country of the Hui teaching, Muhanmode [Muhammad]. Among the books there is a book, *The Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam*, of a very presumptuous (*jianwang* 僭妄) kind, which does not respect the prohibitions regarding using the name of the emperor. Moreover, it . . . [and its arguments] are full of defiant and reckless [language].⁴

The decision to keep Hai Furun under arrest, then, was based on the fact that he had suspicious books in his possession. Some were written in languages (Arabic and Persian, most probably) that the Chinese officials could not read. Although these piqued their curiosity, the rest were more problematic, for although they were in Chinese, their content was both familiar and unfamiliar.

In the days of the *Siku quanshu* campaign, a discovery of unidentified and suspicious books was bound to lead to the involvement of higher authorities.⁵ As R. Kent Guy and many others have demonstrated, text censorship was closely linked to the consolidation of imperial power in the late Qianlong era.⁶ The final consoli-

4. Zhu Chun, "Wei panhuo Huifei," 6a.

5. See, e.g., Spence, *Treason by the Book*.

6. Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*.

dation of the *Han Kitab* coincided chronologically with this imperial effort and, as I have suggested, may well have been inspired by or linked to it in some way.

In 1772, ten years before Hai's arrest, the emperor had initiated a systematic program of cataloging, monitoring, and censoring all of China's books. The emperor remained closely involved in the project.⁷ Among the many reasons behind the campaign was the desire to detect, control, and in some cases destroy anti-Manchu or otherwise seditious works.

Less than two years before Hai's arrest, criteria for classifying works as seditious had been set by the project's directors. These criteria served both to alert provincial officials to the existence of seditious books and to provide guidance on examining suspicious works. The list had become a pressing necessity after provincial officials flooded the court with ostensibly treasonable texts. By 1782, the would-be book censors' overzealousness had become so serious that the emperor had, for the first time since the beginning of the campaign, begun to reprimand provincial officials for too readily accusing texts of sedition.⁸

As the interrogation proceeded, Zhu's report tells us, Hai testified that in 1773 he had left his native village and set off on a journey seeking knowledge. He had traveled from southeastern China, passing through the provinces of Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei, and Anhui, until he reached Shaanxi, where he had stayed for a longer period. At all these places, said Hai, trying to explain how he had obtained the books, he had been given food, and scriptural knowledge had been "transmitted" to him (*chuanjing gongfan* 傳經供飯). However, it was not until 1781 in Hankou, Hubei, that he was given (*zeng* 贈) the books in Chinese that so interested his interrogators.

According to the report, Hai fell ill in Hankou and settled in a mosque to recuperate. Beside it was a hat shop owned by a man of "his own teaching" (同教), a native of Nanjing by the name of Yuan Er 袁二 (Yuan Guozuo). This man had given him the books. Yuan Guozuo's relentless "pushing" of *Han Kitab* books is attested by another source as well. In 1775, in the Tuoshui 沱水 inn, Yuan

7. Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, pp. 31–34, 87–92.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 104–5.

met a Chinese Muslim named Wei Kang 危燭 of Qincheng 棗城 (Jiangxi) and asked him to write a preface to the *Zhenjing zhaowei* 真境昭微 (Exposing the secrets of the true realm), Liu Zhi's translation into Chinese of a Sufi book.⁹ Wei agreed to write a short piece he entitled "[My] Humble Preface" ("Xiaoxu" 小序) in which he said that even though he was not an authority on the text, he had agreed to write an introduction since: "Master Jingchu 景初 [Yuan Guozuo] repeatedly enjoined (*luzhu* 屢囑) me to write an introduction."¹⁰ Wei's use of strong language to describe Yuan's behavior allows us to imagine Yuan Guozuo as an enthusiast committed to the distribution of *Han Kitab* books. Hai Furun probably had a similar encounter with him. The several copies of the *Zhisheng shilu*, Hai was carrying suggests that Yuan, the book's editor and publisher, hoped that the traveling student would distribute them at different locations as he made his way home to Hainan.¹¹

Governor-General Zhu seemed unaware of the regional differences among different groups of Chinese Muslims. He was well aware, however, of the recent admonitions that local officials not be too hasty in sending materials to the throne. As if to excuse himself for drawing the case of Hai to the emperor's attention, he

9. The book, *Lawā'ih*, was written by the Persian Sufi scholar Jāmi in the thirteenth century. For a translation of the Chinese version of this book and a new translation from the Persian, see Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, pp. 113–210. See also Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, pp. 41–42.

10. Wei Kang, "Zhenjing zhaowei xiao xu" (Introduction to the *Zhenjing zhaowei*), in Liu Zhi, trans., *Zhenjing zhaowei*, pp. 1–2 (pp. 65–66). This text is located at the end of book.

11. This point may give us some clues regarding the spread of *Han Kitab* books among Muslim communities in the late Qianlong era. We can only generally sketch the route of Hai's travels, but we know that he spent a long time in northwestern China and there obtained knowledge but not books. However, once he arrived in Hankou, in the middle Yangzi River region, he was given *Han Kitab* books and asked to take them to his home district. It seems, therefore, that *Han Kitab* books in the last decades of the eighteenth century were used and known mostly among communities in central and eastern China. Efforts to spread them outside these regions were not organized but contingent on chance encounters. The spread of *Han Kitab* books overlapped to a great degree with the geographical contours of the Chinese Muslim educational system and was concentrated largely in the central eastern regions of the middle and lower Yangzi.

cautiously wrote that he had attempted to inspect the books himself but that “in his foolishness” could not judge the specific places in which the book’s authors committed their violations and offenses. Providing no specific examples, he contented himself again with mentioning the generally reckless, wild, and vulgar language.

To add more weight to his case, he ventured that Hai might be connected to Muslim unrest far afield: “Now, the said prisoner was returning from Shaanxi to Guangdong, [and] I suspect that he might be a member of a gang of barbarous Muslims escaping from Gansu” 且該犯系陝西回粵恐系甘省番回漏網逆黨. He added that those who had sheltered and fed Hai Furun and transmitted knowledge to him might be part of a widespread underground network assisting northwestern escapees. This gang, he concluded, was involved also in “agitating the minds of the people” 煽惑人心. The distribution of books, he implied, might be part of this general rabble-rousing effort. Zhu concluded his memorial by suggesting that the emperor review the books he was sending and by urging that officials from Hubei and Jiangnan be ordered to investigate the matter and arrest the other gang members.¹²

The northwestern provinces of Gansu and Shaanxi had experienced a series of rebellions and unrest during the late eighteenth century. Large populations of Chinese-speaking Muslims lived in these provinces, and Muslim communities in the region had been involved in small- and large-scale clashes with the state. The Qing had consolidated its military and political control over the central Asian regions (which came to be known as Xinjiang), home to Turkic-speaking Muslims of various ethnicities, only a short time before. Political and social conditions in the region, particularly in Gansu, were highly volatile, and unrest among the Muslims there gave rise to a large-scale rebellion in 1780.

This rebellion was inspired by Ma Mingxin 馬明心 (1719–81), a native of the region and a Sufi leader who had recently returned from several years of study of *Jabriya* Sufi practices in Yemen. Following his return, Ma introduced what he had learned to his co-

12. Zhu Chun, “Wei panhuo Huifei.”

religionists in the region.¹³ The introduction of new elements into Islam was greeted with suspicion both by the state and by conservative Muslims and was a prime cause of religious and secular dissension between different Muslim groups, as well as between Muslims and the state. Official documents of the time contrast an “old teaching” (*jiujiao* 舊教) with the “new teaching” (*xinjiao* 新教) of those Muslims who followed Ma. The intra-Muslim disputes revolved largely around questions of proper Sufi practice of *dhikr*, the ritual recitation of the names of God. As Lipman summarizes it:

After Ma Mingxin's return from “the west” and his successful campaign of conversion [of Muslims to his new practices], Khafiya and Jahriya adherents in “Salar country” (Huangzhong)—and elsewhere in Gansu—became rivals. The Muslims themselves and the Qing state called their altercations “religious disputes,” and official documents record religious justifications for violence to bear out this judgment—vocalization of the *dhikr*, wearing of shoes at funerals, the length and cut of beards or mustaches, and other ritual minutiae, as well as the more generic but more serious charges of heterodoxy and deception. But these “religious” conflicts clearly had secular causes as well. A wide variety of hot and divisive issues . . . compelled the two orders first to confront one another, then to seek redress from the local authorities.¹⁴

Beneath these surface-level, ritual-based causes were the political and social changes brought through Qing consolidation.

The violence in the northwest generated a huge body of official textual discourse concerning the Hui.¹⁵ From this period one we find a wealth of official writings on Chinese Muslims in which they are termed “fierce,” “unruly,” and otherwise threatening to the social order. As Lipman has effectively demonstrated, however, these rebellions are not to be taken as symptomatic of a widespread or systematic anti-“Han” (Chinese) or anti-Qing ideology among Chinese-speaking Muslims. He refers to them instead as “multifo-

13. On Ma Mingxin's Sufi practices, see Joseph Fletcher, “Central Asian Sufism and Ma Ming-hsin's New Teaching”; reprinted in idem, *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, section IV.

14. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 103–4.

15. See Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*; Yu Zhengui, *Zhongguo lidai zhengquan yu Yisilanjiao*; Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*; Chu, *The Moslem Rebellion in Northwest China*; and Israeli, *Muslims in China*.

cal rebellions” and argues that they were a series of local events created by and reflective of a number of intersecting social, economic, and class factors.¹⁶

For Chinese Muslims in northwestern China (and, as a result, in other places as well), it was a period during which they confronted an increasingly hostile and suspicious state. Nakada Yoshinobu’s study of 40 biographies of Muslim officials found in the *Qing shi gao* paints a rather sad picture; he argues that Muslim officials suffered a decline in status and position as a result of the Muslim rebellions in the northwest.¹⁷

The arrest of Hai Furun was a tiny reflection of this climate of suspicion and unrest.¹⁸ Despite the apparent lack of Muslim unrest in China’s eastern regions, his status as a Muslim was enough to worry local officials, who may well have been biased against Muslims in general. As the story unfolded, the possible link between the northwestern rebellions and the Muslim scholars from the east faded away, and the confiscated *Han Kitab* books emerged as the center of regional official and imperial focus.

In a second memorial to the emperor, dated July 3, 1782, almost two weeks after his first report, Governor-General Zhu sounded much more alarmed.¹⁹ By this time, he had read the confiscated books and felt able to discuss them in greater detail. In the interim he had dropped his theory about an empirewide Muslim gang and focused on the books themselves, which he saw as highly dangerous. In this second memorial, the word “urgent” (*qie* 切) is used no less than four times, and the governor-general identified Yuan Guozuo—“a man whom people call *taiye* 太爺” (a term of great respect)—as the central figure in a dangerous network based in the Jiangnan area devoted to the production and dissemination of books.

Again, but with much stronger words, Zhu urged his colleagues from Hubei and Jiangnan to arrest all the people involved in the

16. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, pp. 103–66.

17. Nakada Yoshinobu, “Shindai Kaikyōto no issokumen,” pp. 66–86.

18. Lipman, “‘A Fierce and Brutal People.’”

19. Zhu Chun, memorial to the emperor, 7.3.1782, “Huifei Hai Furun” 盤獲回匪海富潤 (The arrest of Hui rebel Hai Furun), ZSSL (1874), 8b–10b.

network. The prefect of Wuchang (Hankou), he wrote, should arrest Yuan Guozuo immediately and interrogate him. Zhu even suggested the agenda for the investigation: "Yuan Er should be arrested and questioned: Where and to whom else did he give books? Who are translators and printers?" The governor also urged that the Yuan's hat shop in Hankou be searched for additional textual contraband. If more such books were found, the prefect should learn the names of all who possessed them and all who were involved in their production. The memorial ends with the words "urgent, urgent!"²⁰

Zhu again did not specify what was so dangerous in the books but simply reiterated his previous assessment that their language was "wild, reckless, and presumptuous." I suspect that the contents of the books had little to do with Zhu's alarm. Rather, it was the scope of the *Han Kitab* project, particularly the large number of people involved in it, that startled the governor-general. The texts before him gave ample evidence of the numerous scholars who had worked on the project. We may assume that the governor had never been exposed to such a large body of unfamiliar material written in his own language. Perhaps the thing that was so aggravating to him was that some of the material was quite familiar, only put to most unfamiliar use. Maybe it was the use of the Confucian classics in the service of another, strange and unfamiliar, teaching that Zhu found so "reckless." He may have wondered at the temerity of Muslims in using the vocabulary and concepts of Confucianism. The one thing that is totally clear about his reaction is his extreme and agitated distress.

Following this second, near hysterical missive, the emperor saw fit to respond. On July 18, the Qianlong emperor sent a brief directive seeking to clear the matter, allay Governor-General Zhu's fears, and prevent him from taking further action. He rebuked Zhu for making false allegations and began by stating the "handling of the matter [had gone] entirely too far." The emperor wrote that the books that were troubling Zhu were representative

20. Ibid.

of an "old teaching"²¹ and were not a factor in the religious violence in the northwest:

As regards the Hui of the Old Sect [Teaching], they are numerous in all provinces, and the number of them residing in Shensi [Shaanxi] and the northern provinces is especially large. The sacred texts which they regularly recite consist of books handed down from of old containing no really scurrilous or plainly seditious language. Furthermore the phrases in these books to which Chu Ch'un [Zhu Chun] has drawn attention are on the whole crude expressions which cannot be described as violent and rebellious. These are simple, ignorant Hui people faithful to their teaching and if we feel constrained to hamstring them with the laws there will be immense trouble. Further, last year's outbreak by rebellious Hui in Kansu [Gansu] resulted from a feud between the New and Old Sects [Teachings], and religious books were not used to inflame opinion. Can Chu Ch'un be the only man not to have heard this!?

The emperor concluded by saying that "if it is indeed a matter of rebellious language, punish according to the law and do not be lenient. [However,] if it is only a matter of books with vulgar language, there is no need investigate."²²

The emperor's edict arrived a little too late: Zhu's alarmist memos had resulted in several arrests in Hubei and Jiangnan. Since it took several days for reports and instructions to make their way from one place to another, the matter became more and more complicated as different individuals acted on days-old information. As a result, the emperor had to send several edicts before the entire matter was resolved.

In the wake of Zhu's alarm, various other governors had taken action. On July 7, Min Ouyuan 閔鷗元, the governor of Jiangsu, reported that upon reading Zhu's memorials, he ordered that everyone from Nanjing involved with Muslim books be arrested and that all books be confiscated and burned. Echoing Zhu's memorial,

21. In this observation, the emperor, while clearly a defender of Muslims in general, was mistaken. The distinction between "old" and "new" teachings was relevant only in the northwestern context and not in the south and east.

22. Qianlong edict, 7.12.1782, *QSMZJ*, 1: 737. The first part is cited in Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, p. 128.

he wrote: "Burn [the books] urgently! urgently!" 火速切切.²³ This despite the fact that Governor Min had not seen the books at all; he was simply acting on Zhu's memorials.

On July 17, ten days after Governor Min's memo, the governor-general of Jiangnan, Sa Zai 薩栽, reported that a special envoy, Liu Zun 劉樽, had been sent to Nanjing to arrest suspects and search their houses. Liu reported to his superiors that when he searched Yuan Guozuo's house, he found two more suspicious books: *Tianfang xingli* and *Tianfang dianli*. After learning that their author, Liu Zhi, was long dead, he arrested Liu's great-grandson, Liu Mengyi 劉夢義, along with Yuan Guozuo's brother, Yuan Guoyu 袁國裕. He also reported that Jin Tianzhu, the author of *Qingzhen shiyi* (found among Hai's books), was apparently dead, but he had arrested two more persons apparently involved in the operation, Tan Zaiwen 譚在文 and Gai Shaoxian 改紹賢, as well others whom he did not mention by name. All the detainees were sent to the governor of Jiangsu for questioning.²⁴

A similar if more cautious response came from the governor of Hubei, Yao Chenglie 姚成烈. Yao waited until he had read the emperor's first response before he released his own report, in which he cited Zhu's memo and the initial imperial reply. He arrested Yuan Guozuo in Hankou as soon as he heard about the arrest of Hai Furun. As instructed, he had investigated the matter and questioned Yuan Guozuo: "The man Yuan Guozuo is a native of Nanjing and is seventy years old. All the books in question are from Nanjing and were produced by the already deceased Liu Zhi. Yuan said that he gave the books as a gift to Hai Furun and that he was not selling them for a profit." The governor reported that Yuan had said of himself (and it seems that Yao concurred) "that he was a man who minds his own business and upholds the law." Yao also had read (or at least perused) the books in question, and

23. Min Ouyuan, memorial to the emperor, 7.7.1782, ZSSL (1874), 16a-b; Qianlong's response to this memorial, ZSSL (1874), 21b-22a.

24. Sa Zai, memorial, 7.17.1782, "Wei qinzun yuzhi gongzhe fuzou" 為欽遵諭旨恭折覆奏 (Concerning respectfully receiving the Imperial Order [and] respectfully replying), ZSSL (1874), 23b-25b; Qianlong's response, 7.28.1782, ZSSL (1874), 26b-28b, and QZMZJ, 1: 739-40.

although he found some vulgar sentences, he judged that they were not "rebellious, wild, or reckless." Upon the emperor's command, he released Yuan and all the others who had been arrested with him.²⁵ On August 18, on reading Yao's report, the emperor commented that Yuan Guozuo was a law-abiding subject whose actions were harmless. All those arrested had been punished for no reason, he concluded: "Zhu Chun should re-examine this communication and act accordingly."²⁶

During the affair the Qianlong emperor wrote several edicts repeating his orders first to treat the suspects with leniency and then to release the arrested men and return their books. The cry to burn the books made him particularly angry:

The sacred books which they [the Muslims] revere are household knowledge among the Hui people. . . . Surely they could not be exterminated and their books burned! The books which they daily recite were brought to China long ago during the Tang and Sung dynasties, and their doctrine is not to be compared with that of the White Lotus and other sects which seek notoriety on purpose to amass money, gain a large following, and even to cause rioting. . . . High provincial officers when faced with heresies and rebellion must of course do their duty conscientiously, but to proceed hastily against these long-existing books of the Hui teaching as though they were unlawful would be a reckless error.²⁷

The emperor reprimanded Governors-General Zhu Chun and Sa Zai and lectured all concerned at length about Chinese Muslims. The emperor emphasized that he had nothing against any Muslim who was merely preserving the customs and the rituals of Islamic teaching.²⁸ Indeed, he implied, a responsible government promotes such preservation of tradition.²⁹

25. Yao Chenglie, "Wei zun zhishi Yuan Er" 爲遵旨釋袁二 (Concerning obeying [the order to] release Yuan Er), 7.27.1782, ZSSL (1874), 11b-13b.

26. Qianlong imperial edict in response to Yao's memorial, 8.18.1782, ZSSL (1874), 15b-16a, and QZMZJ, 1: 741.

27. Qianlong imperial edict, 7.31.1782, ZSSL (1874), 26b-28b, and QZMZJ, 1: 739-40. Part of this edict is translated in Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China*, p. 128, and is used here.

28. Qianlong imperial edict, 7.31.1782, QZMZJ, 1: 739-40.

29. Qianlong's ten edicts on the matter are dated between July 12 and September 4, 1782. They can be found in QZMZJ, 1: 737-43.

The main thrust of his various edicts, however, was the idea that the empire was home to numerous Muslims of many sorts and that they could not all be judged as one. He made a distinction between law-abiding Muslims and the northwestern rebels. The way in which he did so gave credit not only to such Muslims but to other non-mainstream groups as well: "Those Muslims who are law-abiding and peaceful are no different from the Buddhist monks, the Daoist priests, and the [Tibetan] lamas."³⁰

This position is an expression of the Qianlong emperor's ethnic policies, which emphasized the empire's diverse ethnicities, for all of which he was highest earthly authority. Evelyn Rawski has shown that the Qianlong emperor's "vision of himself as the penultimate only unifier of the diverse people under his rule also advanced the concept of separate cultural identities within the conquest elite. The emperor himself had to be all things to all people, but the subjects—Mongols, Tibetans and Turkic-speaking Muslims—were to remain distinctly different in their religions, languages, and traditions."³¹

Toward the end of his reign, the Qianlong emperor wrote:

In 1743 I first practiced Mongolian. In 1760 after I pacified the Muslims [the Uighurs], I acquainted myself with Uighur (*Huiyu*). In 1776 after the two pacifications of Jinquan [rebels] I became roughly conversant in Tibetan (*fanyu*). In QL 45 [Qianlong 45, or 1780] because the Panchen Lama was coming to visit I also studied Tangut (*Tangulayu*). Thus when the rota of Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans come every year to the capital for audiences I use their languages and do not rely on an interpreter . . . to express the idea of conquering by kindness.³²

The point here—as with Chinese Muslim origin myths—is not the literal truth of the emperor's claim but his desire to represent himself as one who "conquered with kindness," acknowledged peoples' differences, and spoke to them in their own languages. It seems unlikely that he would have known so many languages well enough to converse in them. Whether he did, however, is neither here nor there—the central point the emperor wished to make was

30. Qianlong imperial edict, 7.27.1782, QZMZJ, I: 738.

31. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 60–61.

32. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 6, and *passim*.

that he was an enlightened and subtle ruler who understood and even respected and fostered the differences among the different peoples over whom he ruled.

Rawski's striking depiction of Qianlong as the cultivator of a multiethnic empire is based largely on his comments on "foreign" subject peoples, particularly those who inhabited the westernmost peripheries of his domains. Her careful reading, however, seems also to be given weight by the interactions of the Qianlong emperor with peoples closer to the empire's core. He supported the distinctiveness not only of peoples and ethnic groups who spoke different languages and were situated in territories outside "China proper" but also of Chinese-speaking groups *within* China who followed a shared collective tradition and memory that set them apart from other Chinese speakers of the urban east. The emperor was probably unaware of the vibrant Muslim network of scholars that had been busy inventing itself within China proper for the prior century and a half, but once their activities came to his attention, he acted according to the principles he had promoted for other groups.

This is evident in his treatment of the book that started the series of Muslim arrests and interrogations, the *Zhisheng shilu*. The emperor read the book, or at least reviewed it, stamped it with his *yulan* 御覽 (read by the emperor) seal, and wrote a favorable opinion on it. The document entitled "Imperial Commentary on the *Zhisheng shilu*" ("Yupi *Zhisheng shilu*" 御批至聖實祿講義), was a formal response to Governor-General Zhu's allegations regarding the text, in which the emperor rebutted, point by point, each of Zhu's charges.³³

In response to Zhu's claim that "the *Zhisheng shilu* records the deeds of emperors and kings [who are not ours] and is [therefore seditious]," the emperor didactically wrote: "Muhammad was the king of the western regions, and the section of the book that records his deeds was originally a western classic, translated [later] into Chinese." Since Muhammad was from a different place and time, he was hardly a competitor! As for allegations of "wild" language, "Even if the language is rustic, the overall content is very

33. Qianlong imperial edict, "Yupi *Zhisheng shilu*" (Imperial Commentary on the *Zhisheng shilu*), ZSSL (1874), 29b–33b.

logical." Moreover, he explained, since the text had been translated from another language, its disseminators could not be accused of themselves writing in a "vulgar," let alone "seditious," way.

The emperor's response to Zhu's frantic allegations did not stop there. Zhu had asked: "Muhammad is presented [in the text] as the most sagely on earth among all past and present—isn't this language arrogant and perverse?" Qianlong answered calmly: "This book for the most part praises Muhammad's esteem[able qualities]—how can that be taken as arrogance and perversity?" Finally, to Zhu's suggestion that the author of the *Tianfang xingli* ought to be investigated, the emperor rebuked the governor for not exercising enough care in distinguishing different groups of Muslims. There were, the emperor noted, "Salar Hui" 撒喇回民 (i.e., north-western Muslims), and "neidi Hui" 内地回民—"the Muslims of China proper." Hai, along with the authors of the *Han Kitab* texts, clearly enjoyed membership in the latter category. Between the two groups there was "no connection." Muslims who were specifically "Chinese," in the sense maintained by the *Han Kitab* authors, were, to the emperor's mind, a distinct category.

The emperor's missive is, of course, a dialogue between the Qianlong emperor, the individual, and his subordinate Zhu Chun. On a deeper level, however, it is representative of a subtler, more implicit dialogue that pervaded contemporary Qing society. This was both a dialogue between the Manchus and the various peoples over whom they sought to rule and a subtle interplay between and among all those various groups themselves. In reading the *Zhisheng shilu*, the Qianlong emperor, was on some level interacting with Muslim literati thought; at the same time, by using the "rebellious" Salar Hui as a foil against which to compare them, he was interacting with his empire's northwestern peoples. Moreover, what he witnessed in the *Zhisheng shilu* was yet another dialogue, that of the *Han Kitab* literati elite and the Confucian intellectual society within which they sought to situate themselves.

The complexity of the interaction would not have been lost on Qianlong. As he sat down to read the *Zhisheng shilu*'s opening pages, what he read in Yuan Guozuo the hatmaker's preface would have struck him as familiar. Yuan, it will be recalled, repeated the

formulaic invocation of Mencius, which was designed to show a homology between the sages and rulers of east and west. "Shun, an Eastern barbarian, [and] King Wen, a Western barbarian, conducted China [like two matching] parts of one tally."

Yuan had written the preface in 1778, on the occasion of the book's publication. "Sages cannot be limited by their locality and region, nor can they differ from one another because of their location," wrote Yuan. Yuan may well have been citing Mencius, but he also was paraphrasing none other than the Manchu emperor himself, who just one year earlier had pointed out that during the Ming the Manchus and their predecessors had been recorded less than glowingly in Chinese records. He held up Mencius' passage—in which Shun, an eastern foreigner like himself, was declared a "barbarian"—and stated that such a thing was nothing to be ashamed of or hidden. Far from "bristl[ing] at the imputation of barbaric origins," the Qianlong emperor dismissed the accusation as inconsequential and thus, as Crossley has written, "wave[d] away centuries of debate among Chinese scholars."³⁴ In short, the emperor was interpreting the passage from *Mencius* in the same way as Yuan the Muslim. As the ruler of China, he could even complain about the passage's "political incorrectness." Furthermore, decrying the arguments made by Yuan Guozuo about Muhammad's sagehood would undermine the ruler's own ideology and self-perception. After all, he, too, was a "barbarian," a non-Chinese who was found deserving to rule China.

What emerges from the literary exchange involving the emperor, Zhu Chun, and Yuan Guozuo is something quite astounding. On one side of the debate we see the emperor and the *Han Kitab* scholars, and on the other Han Chinese officials (the emperor's overt audience) and Han literati (against whom, implicitly, *Han Kitab* scholars constructed their identity). The Qianlong emperor, himself a "eastern barbarian," declared to Han Chinese that he and the Manchus were just as legitimate and enlightened (more so, in fact) as they. The scholars of the *Han Kitab*, for their part, declared that they and their Dao were, similarly, just as legitimate and enlightened as the Dao of the Confucian sages.

34. Cited in Crossley, "*Manzhou yuanliu kao*," p. 764.

The emperor's responses to the book were to become not simply part of the *Zhisheng shilu*'s story, but, more important, of its content as well. Yuan Guozuo, the scholar, publisher, and hatmaker, renewed his scholarly efforts upon his release from prison. His first publication was a new edition of the *Zhisheng shilu*. Bound within its covers was the text and its various scholarly commentaries. Its cover proudly bore a reproduction of the newly acquired imperial seal. Its very first pages reproduced the Qianlong emperor's decree and included all related documents, such as the alarmist memos of the officials. In a way, the persecution allowed Chinese Muslim scholars to produce a version of their dialogue with their surrounding society in a much more effective way than ever before. This time there was a concrete dialogue featuring real officials and an imperial ruling in their favor. The imperial seal on the book was an affirmation that the story that this specific community has been telling itself for the past recent centuries was valid.

In 1784, two years after Yuan's release, the Qianlong emperor visited the city of Nanjing. The hatmaker sought an audience with the emperor. There he presented the emperor a copy of this new edition of the *Zhisheng shilu*. We do not know what the emperor did with that copy.

This insider's view of Chinese Muslim scholarly life reveals a radically different picture of their community from the one provided by external observers. Rather than circumscribe themselves and their activities as alien or simply "Muslim," or understand themselves as a "minority," the Chinese Muslim literate elite elevated the fact of their foreign origins to be the keystone and pivot of their *Chinese* identity. Through constant implicit dialogues with other Chinese elites, this elite reproduced and reinforced their foreignness even while they emphasized it as the basis of their legitimization within China.



Chinese Muslim scholars, as we have seen, crafted themselves as "literati" by expanding that category as it was defined by Chinese cultural norms. Part and parcel of this strategy was the interpretation of their tradition as a Dao and their prophet as a sage. Such interpretations were bound up with their understanding of their

primary obligation as being “learning”—the teaching, study, and preservation of the Dao of Islam. The Chinese Muslim scholarly literatures of the *Han Kitab* also provided foundational myths that simultaneously gave the Chinese Muslim community a position of centrality and importance within China’s imperial history and connected it directly to the origins of Islam itself.

The Chinese Muslim scholarly network and its constituency provided the mechanisms through which an elite form of Chinese Muslim identity was consolidated and constructed. Writing, study, and scholarship were the activities through which learned Chinese Muslims found a place for themselves within literary Chinese culture. Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Yuan Guozuo, Zhao Can, Liu Zhi, and countless others understood their tradition to be one that contributed to the stability of the state and believed that its philosophies expanded on truths found within Confucianism. Through their activities as the preservers of this tradition, they understood themselves as conservative traditionalists whose activities brought peace to society. As the poem at the end of the *Huibui yuanlai* put it, Muslims had been in China for centuries, “pacifying” the state.

The specific identity that emerged from the Chinese Muslim scholarly network was one that negotiated an interstitial space and sought to define “Muslimness” as Chinese and “Chineseness” as Muslim. This simultaneity of identity rested on myths that explained Chinese Muslim origins in such a way as to validate both Chinese Muslims’ centrality to Chinese tradition and their direct descent from the closest companions of the Prophet. It was an identity that was lived, preserved, and developed through scholarship; it saw Islam as compatible with and supplementary to Confucian tradition and as both encompassed *by* and encompassing *of* that tradition. Many of the *Han Kitab* stories recounted in this book show this strategy of encompassment at play. The fictional exchange between the Prophet Muhammad and the Sui emperor, for instance, in the biography of the Prophet authored by Liu Zhi, is typical in this regard. Just as in Liu’s account the first Muslims sent to China were both critical to Chinese civilization and directly linked to the origins of Islam, Chinese Muslim literati viewed themselves as central to both worlds and regarded their

displacement in China as paradoxically definitive of their status both as good Chinese and as good Muslims.

The various examples in this book show this basic motif and dynamic repeated in numerous stories by eighteenth century *Han Kitab* authors. All intimate that China's Muslims were descendants of the original company of Muslims sent to China at the direct order of Prophet and at the invitation of the Chinese emperor. Through these tales, the authors of the *Han Kitab* forged a framework in which Chinese Muslims were at the overlapping center of "Islam" and "China." Occupying the shared space between the two—brought to China at the behest of the emperor and upon the orders of Muhammad—Chinese Muslims are, in the stories these people told of themselves, not of highest importance in either realm but are essential to both. So it is that the *Han Kitab*'s creators and students were not so much marginalized by their diasporicity, in the sense of their link to an imagined Islamic homeland, as they were essentially—and positively—defined by it.

The *Han Kitab* can be read as another product of a period during which, as a result of the vigorous Manchu military, political, and cultural campaigns as well the attempt to create a Manchu identity, many of China's cultural categories were opened to negotiation and redefinition. In Rawski's words, "Qing policies stimulated social, cultural, and economic changes in the peripheries that encouraged the growth of ethnic identities among the Mongols, Uighurs and Tibetans."³⁵ This book suggests that another, unintended and indirect, outcome of Qing policies was the emergence of a distinct cultural, not ethnic, identity. It was not the state of being "other" or being a "minority" that was the central cultural pivot around which this Chinese Muslim identity coalesced. Much work remains to be done on the as yet ill-defined and largely undertheorized concept of diasporicity.³⁶ The scholars of the *Han Kitab* hinged their unique self-understanding on a vision in which they fully inhabited two worlds rather than being exiles from one and anomalous visitors in the other.

35. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, p. 301.

36. See, e.g., the recent programmatic article of Kim Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," which summarizes the problematic concerning the concept of diaspora.

The immediate community that participated in and was affected by the identity-shaping activities of the Chinese Muslim scholarly network represents, of course, only one tiny slice of what now is known as the “Hui nationality.” It is a sector that showed remarkable resilience and consistency in its articulation of a Chinese Muslim identity that made Chinese Muslims see themselves as at home in both the Islamic and the Chinese worlds. For those interested in attempting an internal history of Chinese Muslims—one based not on official documents or on Han literati discourse³⁷ but on the words of Chinese Muslims themselves—the Chinese Muslim scholarly network is perhaps the only possible entry, for the simple reason that it was the only sector of Chinese Muslim society that produced any self-documentation. It is certain that other Chinese Muslims had foundational myths and a distinct self-perception vis-à-vis dominant Chinese cultural forms. What that perception might have been, however, will remain, for lack of evidence, unknown.³⁸

As Leslie’s bibliographic work has shown, each of the *Han Kitab* texts was reprinted at least five or six times throughout the nineteenth century. Close examination of the different editions reveals that they were printed from Sichuan to Guangdong, from Yunnan to Beijing. These texts circulated all over China.³⁹ However, the production of new texts ceased at the end of the eighteenth century. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the *Han Kitab* was, functionally, a “fixed canon.” As scholars have shown in an array of different cultural contexts, canon formation of precisely the sort represented by the *Han Kitab* is a near-ubiquitous feature of the identity formation of literate groups. The story of the Chinese Muslim scholarly network and its production, reproduction, and study of the *Han Kitab* contributes further evidence to this body of theoretical literature.

37. See Lipman, “Statute and Stereotype.”

38. There has been some research on Chinese Muslim “oral traditions.” Some of these traditions are included in Li Shujiang and Luckert, *Mythology and Folklore of the Hui*.

39. Donald Leslie’s bibliographical study, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*, shows that most of *Han Kitab* texts were published throughout the nineteenth century at least five times each.

More significantly, however, the story of the *Han Kitab* and the community that stood behind it contributes to a growing body of historiography concerned with the flexibility, assailability, and mutability of Chinese cultural categories during the Qing period. The tale of Chinese Muslim scholarly activity and the production of the *Han Kitab* is the story of the way in which one group came to understand and negotiate its self-perception against a Confucian backdrop that at first blush did not lend itself to outsider identification. Finally, that the culmination of this literary form of Chinese Muslim identity took place during the Qing, and—as in the case of Hai Furun’s arrest—was at times directly affected by the Qing imperium, gives further weight to the emerging consensus that holds that period of Chinese history to be uniquely dynamic, fluid, and complex.

In 1935, Jin Jitang 金吉堂 (1908–78), a Chinese Muslim historian and a “Hui nationalist” intellectual, concluded his history of Chinese Islam with the following statement:

Chinese scholarship, after 4,000 years, reached its most flourishing point during the Qing. At the same time, during the first half of the Qing dynasty, great masters of the Hui Teaching also rose magnificently. In Wuxia [Suzhou, Jiangsu], there was Zhang Zhong; in Jingling [Nanjing] first there was Wang Daiyu; he was followed by Ma Zhongxin [Ma Junshi], Wu Zunqie [Wu Zixian], Yuan Ruqi, and Liu Hanying, until Liu Zhi [appeared] and [that was] the great completion. 中國學術，四千年來至有清而稱極盛：同時中國回教宗人才亦蔚起于清代之前半葉。在吳下有張中：金陵先有王岱輿；繼之有馬中信伍遵契，袁汝琦，劉漢英，至劉智而集大成。⁴⁰

Significantly, Liu Zhi is cast as the Confucius, or the “Great Completer,” of a Chinese Muslim tradition. The passage suggests a link between the cultural activities of the *Han Kitab* scholars of the early Qing and the emergence of what Dru Gladney has termed “a new [Hui] ethnoreligious identity in China”⁴¹ during the twentieth century. The scholarly project of the *Han Kitab* cast ripples that stretched further than its authors imagined. Thus, this book ends with a call for another study, a detailed analysis of their journey to modernity.

41. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, p. xvi.

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Appendix

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Appendix

Table A1
Numbers of Recorded Students in the *Genealogy*

Region	1550– 90	1590– 1620	1620– 50	1650– 70	1670– 97	Total
Northwest	11	12	9	58	0	90
Southwest	1	2	0	6	0	9
Northeast	0	3	1	76	1	81
Jiangnan	0	4	6	74	20	104
Southeast	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	12	21	16	215	21	285

Table A2
Students in Education Centers

Location	Number	Location	Number
Xi'an	43	Hejian	15
Jining	50	Ganzhou	13
Kaifeng	51	Pingliang	5
Wuchang	9	Hezhou	5
Chengzhou	8	Nanjing	85
Tongxin	10		

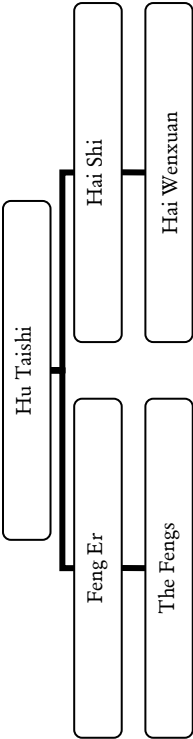


Fig. A1 The first stage of the educational network: northwestern China

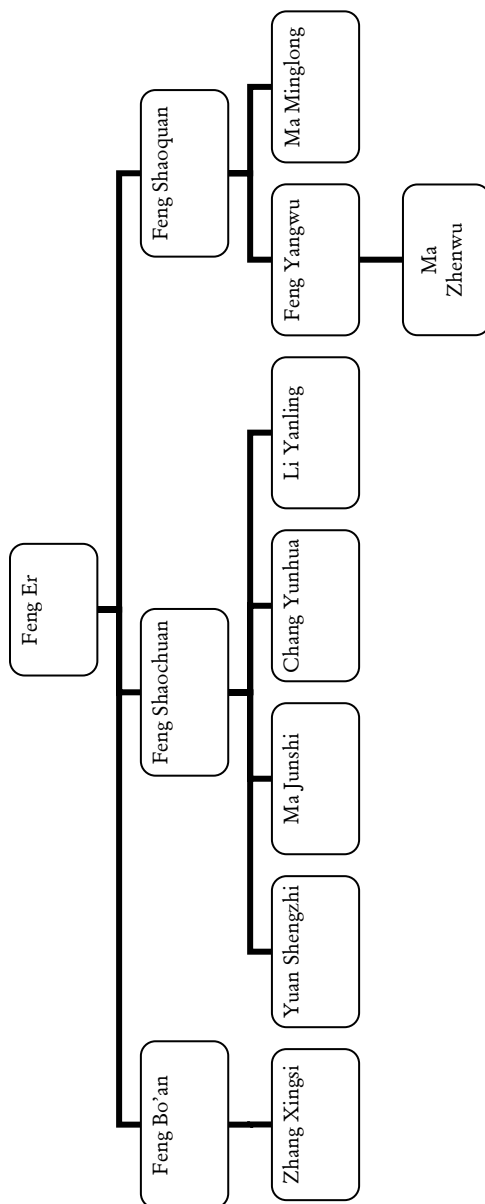


Fig. A2 The second stage of the educational network: the emergence of the major teachers in eastern China

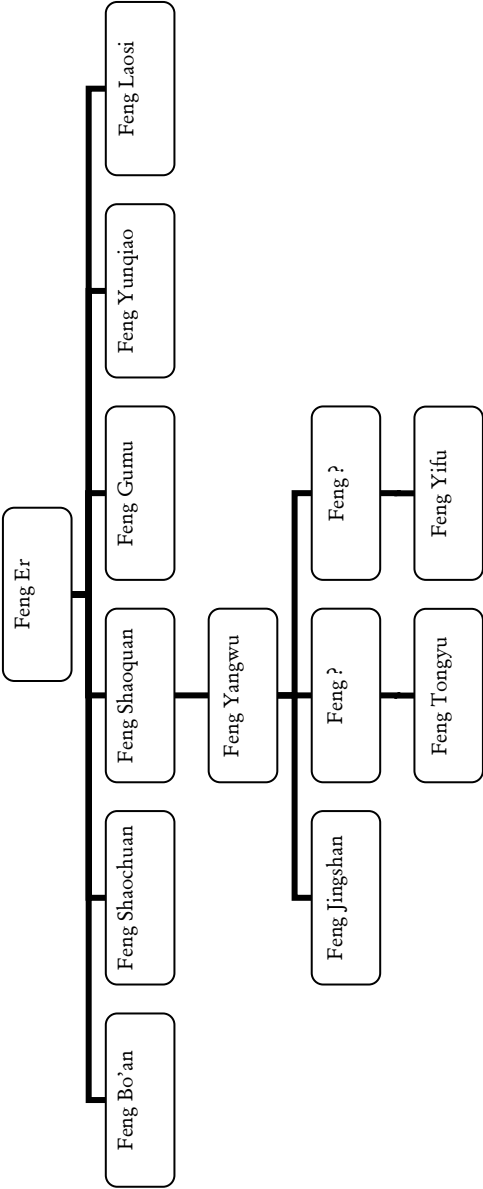


Fig. A3 The Feng Lineage

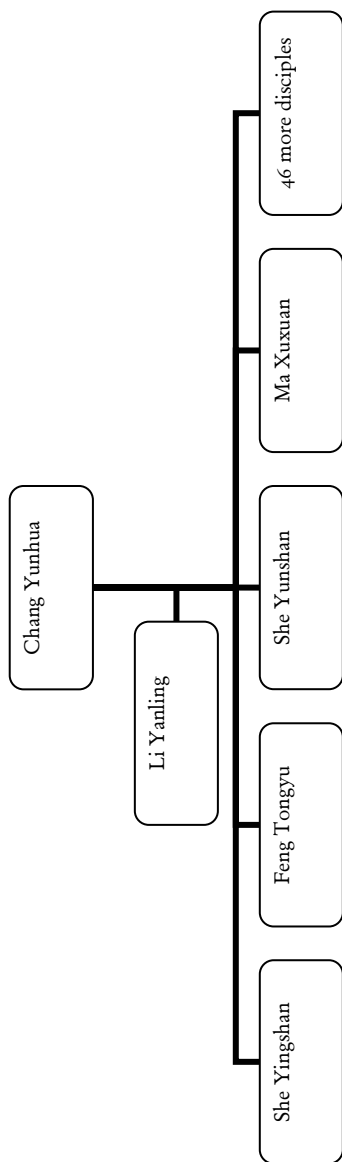


Fig. A4 Chang's School in Jinning

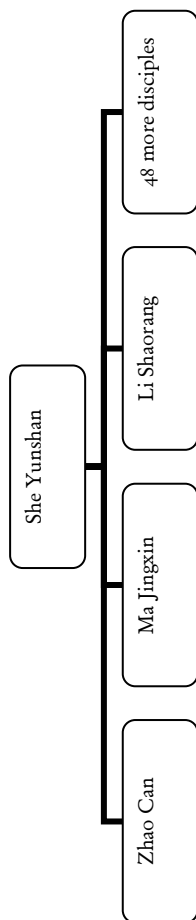


Fig. A5 The School in Kaifeng

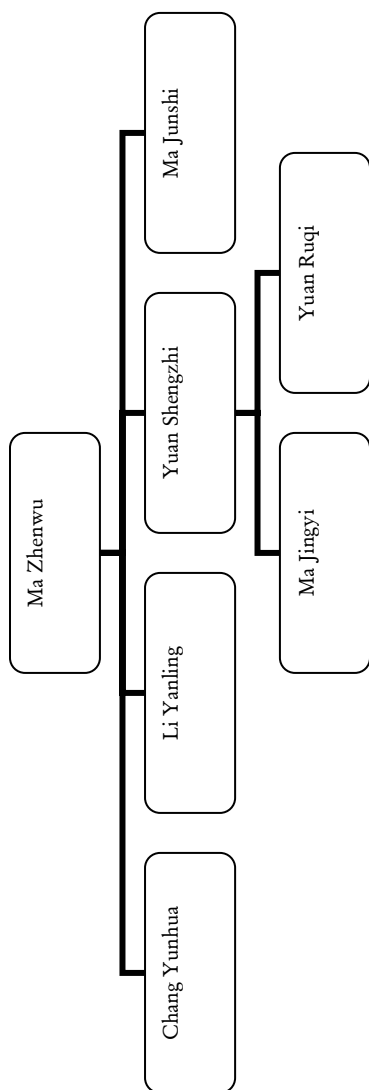


Fig. A6 Major Teachers of Nanjing

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